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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

March 2021 Adar/Nissan 5781 Volume XX Number 7 FREE

EMU Jewish Studies presents Mira Awad: A Concert/Conversation

Martin B. Shichtman, special to the WJN

Eastern Michigan University's Center for Jewish Studies presents Mira Awad in a concert and conversation on Sunday, March 7 at 3 p.m.

Mira Award

Singer, songwriter, actress, artist, and content creator, Mira Awad has long been a major figure in Israeli and Palestinian life and culture — performing music; appearing in television, theater, and film; creating visual installations. In 2009, however, she exploded onto the international scene when, representing Israel at the Eurovision Song Contest, she joined her longtime friend and frequent collaborator, Achinoam Nini (known outside of Israel as Noa), to perform "There Must Be Another Way," the first time any Israeli entry included Arabic lyrics. She is among the actors in the hit Israeli television series *Arab Labor* and has even been a participant in Israel's version of *Dancing With the Stars*.

Mira Awad is also a forceful activist for women's rights, for equal citizenship for Palestinians living in Israel, for a two-state solution, and for environmental awareness. Her eloquent advocacy for dialogue and co-existence, for peace and solidarity, has brought considerable praise (and some criticism) across the political spectrum. She calls her music Arabic Fusion, a combination of

Continued on page 2

Raoul Wallenberg and the War Refugee Board

Kelsey Robinette Keeves, special to the WJN

Rebecca Erbelding, a historian, archivist, and curator at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, will be delivering the 31st David W. Belin Lecture in American Jewish Affairs virtually on March 16, 2021. Her lecture, "Raoul Wallenberg, the United States, and the myth of a plan," will explore Wallenberg's work on behalf of the War Refugee Board in Budapest, Hungary as revealed by United States government records.

Raoul Wallenberg

Rebecca Erbelding

Raoul Wallenberg, one of the most famous Holocaust-era rescuers, was only 32 years old when he was arrested and disappeared in January 1945, 10 years after graduating from the University of Michigan. "My goal is to restore the context of Budapest, the context of Washington, the relationships between all these events and people, and to explain how the chaos of the Holocaust and the war limited the possibility of carrying out any preconceived plan for his rescue work," explained Erbelding.

Her book, Rescue Board: The Untold

Continued on page 2

New leader of Tucson's Holocaust museum is a genocide survivor herself

Phyllis Braun, originally for the JTA/Arizona Jewish Post

The Holocaust museum in Arizona's second-largest city has tapped a Jewish survivor of an African genocide as its new leader.

The board of directors at the Jewish History Museum/Holocaust History Center in Tucson unanimously selected Gugulethu Moyo in November to become its executive director, making her likely the first Jew of color to lead a major Jewish museum in the United States.

Moyo, the museum's operations director since July 2019, brings a unique set of qualifications encompassing both her career as an international human rights lawyer and personal Jewish journey.

"Gugu has the most remarkable biography I have ever seen in an applicant for a position," said Barry Kirschner, president of the museum board and himself an attorney.

That biography includes a childhood in Zimbabwe, a law career in support of media freedom and a Jewish journey inspired by South African anti-apartheid lawyers.

Gugulethu Moyo is the new executive director of the Tucson Jewish History Museum/Holocaust History Center. PHOTO CAPTTION: : ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE YAGEL

Moyo takes over a 15-year-old institution at a time of intense change for museums, memory and Holocaust education in Arizona.

The COVID pandemic has severely curtailed access to the museum, and its typical stream of non-Jewish visitors, especially schoolchildren on class trips, has stopped. Some programming has moved online in a shift that Moyo described as a "great opportunity and innovation" laced with uncertainty.

At the same time, Arizona has newly mandated education about the Holocaust and other genocides in schools, giving the museum a role in creating materials that draw on its archive of testimonies from survivors who have lived in the southern part of the state.

And the national reckoning over racism that erupted last spring following the death of George Floyd in police custody means that Moyo's vision for the museum's future has renewed resonance.

"The core work," Moyo said, "is to con-

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From the Editor

March 2021, can we all say a shehechiyanu, a prayer of gratitude, that we have made it to this day, this season, this new moment? Our community is bursting with energy: so many opportunities for learning and celebrating it was hard to fit them all into this newspaper. Hopefully, this is our last year of Zoom seders for a while, but I'm grateful that so many of us have learned how to use innovation to celebrate!

Would you be willing to hazard a guess as to how many Jews live in Washtenaw County? How would you go about counting us? Who would you count? These are questions on my mind right now, and on the mind of others in the community. This newspaper is mailed to about 3000 households, yet I think this number could easily double if only I had the addresses of existing households that have someone who identifies as Jewish, Jewish adjacent, was Jewish, or is considering becoming Jewish. Our Jewish community in the U.S. is in a porous and changing era. "Diversity" is a bit of a tired buzzword, but taking a fresh look at who we are is a welcome endeavor that is on the horizon for Washtenaw County. In the meantime, if you know of someone who might have an interest in the Jewish community in Washtenaw, why not ask them if they'd like to receive a free subscription to the *Washtenaw Jewish News*. I'm dreaming that everyone reading this finds one other household to start receiving the paper.

Clare Kinberg

In this issue is the 15th installment of my story about my aunt Rose. I'm about halfway through the telling, and it has been a joy to hear from people about it. If you want to start at the beginning, all prior issues are on the WJN website.

As always, send me your reactions to anything you read here, ideas for articles, and your personal simchas. ■

Raoul Wallenberg and the War Refugee Board *Continued on from page 1*

Story of America's Efforts to Save the Jews of Europe, won the 2018 National Jewish Book Award in the category of Writing Based on Archival Material. A key challenge in writing her book was in organizing the War Refugee Board's records, 120 boxes still in roughly the order they were in the 1940s, organized by topic and name. She spent two years digitizing and organizing hundreds of thousands of pages before she began to read through the records.

She stresses that the most important message from the book is the impact public and private pressure can have on the United States government. "Without this pressure, Roosevelt likely would not have established the War Refugee Board, which ultimately saved tens of thousands of lives. It's an important reminder and inspiration for humanitarian activists today," Erbelding stated.

She believes that the War Refugee Board wasn't more widely known before now for a few reasons. When teaching about the Holocaust, most schools don't have time to focus on the American and international response, and the general summary is that the United States didn't do enough. She believes this is broadly true, but adds that it ignores those who were pushing for the U.S. to take action since 1933. "The history is utterly fascinating, but there's no quick way to tell it without simply listing off the War Refugee Board's vast array of efforts. And the outcome of these efforts isn't an easy answer either. For a host of reasons there is no way to reasonably calculate exactly how many people they 'saved,'" said Erbelding. "But even without easily understood outcomes, I argue it is important to honor the efforts of the War Refugee Board staff and use their work as an example for confronting humanitarian challenges today."

The Belin lecture series was established in 1991 through a generous gift from the late David W. Belin of Des Moines and New York to provide an academic forum for the discussion of contemporary Jewish life in the United States. Previous scholars to hold this honor include Deborah Lipstadt, Samuel Freedman, Ruth Messinger, Jim Loeffler, Beth Wenger, and Lila Corwin Berman among others. Each year, the lecture is also published in written form in collaboration with Michigan Publishing. ■

EMU Jewish Studies presents Mira Awad: A Concert/Conversation *Continued on from page 1*

styles and sounds that weaves together Arabic language with Western harmonies. Awad works with a multitude of artists, including Noa, Idan Raichel, David Broza, Joca Perpignan, George Dalaras, La Oreja de Van Gogh, Andrea Bocelli, Tim Ries (sax player for the Rolling Stones), Steve Hackett (guitarist for Genesis), Orphaned Land, and Bobby McFerrin — collaborations that are themselves often regarded as powerful political statements.

This event is in recognition of Women's History Month. The presentation is co-sponsored by the Academic Engagement Network, the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Michigan, the Jean and Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, the Gayle & Larry Weiseneck Symposium Fund, Hillel at Eastern Michigan University, and EMU Campus Life. There is no cost to attend this program. If you have any questions, please contact Marty Shichtman at jewish.studies@emich.edu. ■

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Sedalia and the American Jewish experience

By Teddy Weinberger

Over the past two decades, whenever I travelled around rural Israel and would come upon a very small town, I would think with amazement and regret: "How wonderful that in Israel there can be sustained Jewish existence in small towns like this." In America, Jews used to live in small towns, but no longer. This is not natural, of course. There is no innate requirement for a Jew to be a city dweller.

The recent guest column by my mother-in-law Willie (Rosenthal) Ross was instructive in this regard. Willie told of a wonderful American Jewish childhood growing up in Sedalia, Missouri. However, there is no longer a Jewish community in Sedalia; it officially ceased to exist in 2001 with the de-consecration of Temple Beth El and the ceremonial transfer of the synagogue's Torah to the Hillel House at the University of Missouri in Columbia. The Temple building is now home to the Pettis County Historical Society & Museum.

Why did Sedalia's Jewish community ultimately disappear? It was not primarily because the local Jews assimilated into the larger (majority-Christian) culture, but because not enough young Jewish adults came back to live in Sedalia after going away to college. Despite the happy childhood that Willie depicted in her column, larger cities such as St. Louis and Kansas City proved too much of a siren call for the Jews of Sedalia. Still, Jews had lived in Sedalia for over a century; the community had thus sustained itself for several generations. What happened toward the end of the twentieth century to cause its demise?

The most important factor here is the small size of the community, which never exceeded a few hundred people. Though the population of Sedalia today is about the same as what it was 100 years ago (1920 census: 21,144; approximate 2021 population: 21,959), there was a significant dip in population between 1960–1990. From an all-time record high (still unbroken) in 1960 of 23,874, the city experienced a decline for the next three censuses, bottoming out in 1990 at 19,800 people. While Sedalia on the whole withstood that dip and its population has crept back up, the Jewish community did not. It takes a number of people to volunteer their time to keep a small synagogue going, and that number probably collapsed during those 30 years — and then the older generation moved away to join their children and grandchildren.

Not coincidentally, toward the end of Sedalia's population decline, Abe and Fan Rosenthal, Willie's parents, moved to be near Willie in Omaha (where they could also benefit from the city's excellent Jewish senior housing and services). For Abe and Fan Rosenthal, however, Sedalia would always be home. So much so that even though they ended their lives in Omaha, they are buried in Sedalia's Hebrew Union Cemetery (founded in 1871). Though they had to know of the slim chances that their descendants would ever visit their graves, Abe and Fan elected to be buried in their beloved Sedalia.

Willie received a lot of emailed comments after her piece appeared in the *Sedalia Democrat*. I was touched by the fact that several expressed sadness at the loss of the Jewish community. For example, Doug Kneibert, former editor of the *Democrat*, wrote: "Sedalia's experience has been duplicated across the nation, as the small-town Jew has become all but extinct. In ways that are hard to describe, I believe that has impoverished the towns affected, Sedalia among them." Small-town life continues to be a viable option for Jews in Israel. In countries dominated by a different religion's culture, small-town existence eventually ceases to be tenable for Jews — whether religiously observant or not. It's good to have a choice. ■

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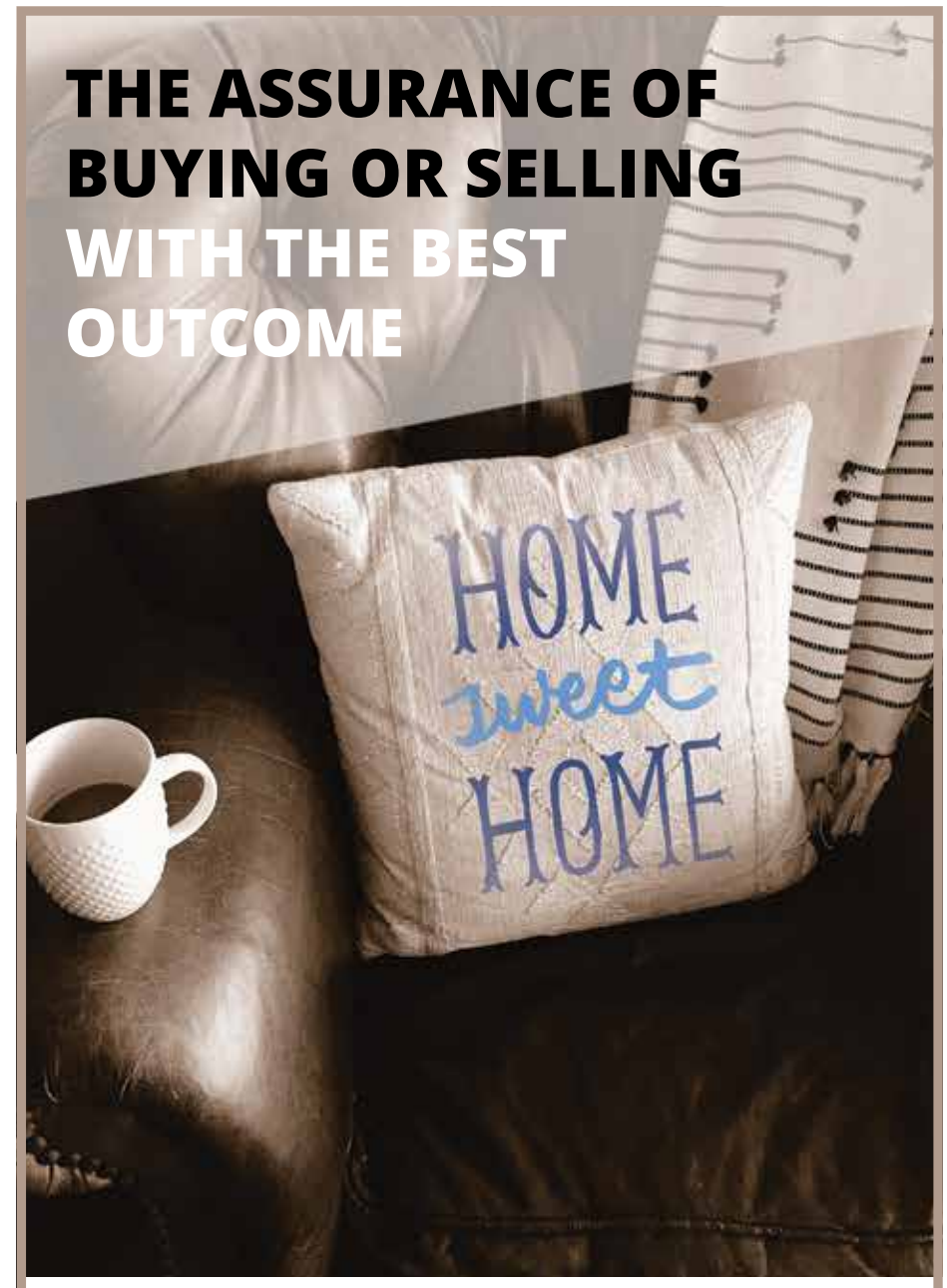

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"The Historical Jesus in His Jewish Context" learning event with Amy-Jill Levine and Gabriele Boccaccini

Kelsey Robinette Keeves, special to the WJN

The Stuart and Barbara Padnos Foundation has provided a gift to the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies to establish the Padnos Engagement on Jewish Learning fund. The new initiative will facilitate annual public educational activities in Jewish Studies throughout the state of Michigan with a focus on the western part of the state.

Amy-Jill Levine

Gabriele Boccaccini

The Padnos family have been business and community leaders in Michigan for over a century. In 1988, the late Stuart Padnos created the Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation Visiting Professorship in Judaic Studies in commemoration of his parents, Helen and Louis Padnos, beginning a long-standing and productive relationship between the Padnos family and the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies.

The inaugural Padnos Public Engagement on Jewish Learning Event, to take place on March 10 at 7 p.m., will feature Amy-Jill Levine of Vanderbilt University and Gabriele Boccaccini of the University of Michigan in discussion on "The Historical Jesus in His Jewish Context," with a response by Jeremiah Cataldo of Grand Valley State University. The event, to be broadcast on Zoom, will present the latest research on the historical Jesus and explore its implications for contemporary Judaic Studies.

The scholars will examine the common history shared between Jews and Christians, and how this historical knowledge is necessary for a faithful biblical interpretation. "I am interested in how historical research and literary critical analysis can help people who hold the text sacred to correct all-too-common anti-Jewish preaching and teaching," stated Levine.

Explaining how he became interested in the topic, Boccaccini added, "I was fascinated with Second Temple Judaism as the formative period of both Christianity and Judaism. I wanted to understand why some Jews, like Jesus and his first followers, despite having so much in common, went in one direction, while others took a different path."

Levine and Boccaccini both commented that though they've been studying Second Temple Judaism for decades, they still find new and exciting things in their research. "Historians ask different questions; archaeologists unearth new artifacts; theologians and ethicists pose alternative readings; and we biblical scholars — informed by all these riches and more — continue to have new insights. The text is inexhaustible," said Levine.

Boccaccini added, "For me, the real excitement came when I realized that the real problem was not simply reclaiming the Jewishness of Jesus but understanding what kind of Jew Jesus was, as there were many different ways of being a Jew in the first century, as well as today. And when I realized that the New Testament was not a collection of texts that tells us something about Judaism, but a collection of Jewish texts that testifies to a distinctive variety of ancient Judaism." ■

Making sense of the Jewish vote

Martin B Shichtman, special to the WJN

Pollster Jim Gerstein will speak with the Eastern Michigan University Center for Jewish Studies on the topic "Making Sense Of The Jewish Vote In 2020" on Tuesday, March 23 at 7 p.m.

Both of America's major political parties imagined 2020 as a transformative year — and this was especially true as these parties reached out to Jewish Americans. Republicans saw the 2020 vote as a paradigm-shifting opportunity, in which issues like US/Israeli relations would finally bring about Jewish political realignment. Democrats believed that the 2020 election would serve to reinforce bonds among America's minority communities, with Jews securing old alliances that might have suffered some drift during the Trump years. EMU is honored to present pollster Jim Gerstein, who will address these and other issues in his talk: "Making Sense of the Jewish Vote in 2020."

Jim Gerstein

Jim Gerstein is widely acknowledged as America's leading authority on Jewish voting patterns. He is founding partner of GBAO, a Washington-based firm providing strategic planning, communications, project management, and research services to nonprofit organizations, advocacy leaders, corporations, labor unions, and political candidates. Previously, Gerstein was executive director of the progressive research and strategy organization Democracy Corps. From 1997–2001 he was executive director of the Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation. During the 1999 Israeli Prime Ministerial campaign, Gerstein joined Ehud Barak's U.S.-based consulting team (led by James Carville); he served as the team's representative on the ground in Israel, overseeing polling, paid media, and message development for the campaign.

There is no cost to attend this program; however, registration is required at: https://tinyurl.com/emulecture9.

This presentation is co-sponsored by Hillel at Eastern Michigan University and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. The Center for Jewish Studies would also like to offer a special thank you to Jessica "Decky" Alexander and Bruce Kutinsky.

If you have any questions, please contact Marty Shichtman at jewish.studies@emich.edu. ■

Devi Mays receives National Jewish Book Award

Kelsey Robinette Keeves, special to the WJN

Devi Mays, Assistant Professor of Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, has won a National Jewish Book Award for her first book, *Forging Ties, Forging Passports: Migration and the Modern Sephardi Diaspora*, published by Stanford University Press. The book won in the category of Sephardic Culture, receiving the Mimi S. Frank Award in Memory of Becky Levy. Awarded by the Jewish Book Council, the National Jewish Book Awards are the longest-running North American awards program in the field of Jewish literature. The 70th National Jewish Book Awards were announced January 27 and will be celebrated on April 12 in a virtual gala. The full list of awardees is available on the Jewish Book Council website.

Devi Mays

Forging Ties, Forging Passports explores Sephardi Jewish migrations to Mexico from the Ottoman Empire and its successor states. Mays argues that the passport regimes that came into being in the aftermath of the First World War did not map easily onto the way of life of cosmopolitan Sephardi Jews, who found themselves out of place in the nation-states that replaced the multinational empires of the prewar period. Many Sephardi Jews, she shows, navigated this trans-migratory landscape by creatively refashioning themselves, shifting citizenships and nationalities in accordance with legal requirements, while retaining the deep cultural, personal, and business ties that forged their everyday identities.

"Professor Mays' scholarship speaks to a wide array of audiences and contributes to several disciplines, showing the wide reach of Judaic Studies," noted Jeffrey Veidlinger, Director of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies. "The book is poetically written and tells the remarkable stories of a diverse group of historical subjects. The National Jewish Book Award is a fitting and well-deserved recognition of her impressive achievement."

Mays commented, "*Forging Ties, Forging Passports* investigates the challenges that Sephardi individuals and families faced to maintain connections in a world increasingly divided by policed borders and paperwork. In doing so, I hope that it speaks to similar challenges faced by millions of migrants today." ■

ADL announces bipartisan PROTECT plan to fight domestic terrorism

Anti-Defamation League Press Release

ADL finds domestic extremist murders in 2020 are overwhelmingly linked to far-right extremists. Right-wing extremists were linked to at least 16 extremist-related murders in the United States in 2020 and have been responsible for 75 percent of such murders in the last ten years, according to new data from the ADL.

According to an annual analysis by ADL's Center on Extremism, domestic extremists were responsible for killing at least 17 people in the U.S. in 15 separate incidents in 2020, a significant decrease from the 45 extremist-related murders in 19 incidents documented in 2019, and the 54 murders in 20 incidents in 2018.

Michigan was cited once in the Murder and Extremism report. This incident occurred in Detroit, Michigan, on June 11, 2020 and involved Thomas Curry, who was also involved in a separate but related right-wing extremist-related terrorist attack or plot in September 2020.

Thomas "Krazy" Curry, a white supremacist who was a part of an outlaw biker subculture, shot and killed three people associated with an outlaw biker gang. On September 16, 2020, Curry killed himself during an armed standoff and hostage situation in Detroit that began after Curry fired at a police officer following a traffic stop and chase. In conversations with police and others during the standoff, Curry admitted to the June 16, 2020 killings. Curry had white supremacist tattoos, a Nazi flag, and used the online alias of "Michael Heiliger," which was a fake name used by Nazis during World War II for bank accounts used to hold money and valuables seized from persecuted Jews.

While there were fewer extremist-related killings in 2020, extremist activity in general was on the rise. ADL recorded 16 right-wing extremist-related terrorist attacks or plots in 2020 (through November), an increase from the 13 recorded in 2019. Two of the 16 recorded incidents occurred in Michigan. One of the incidents involved Thomas Curry in September 2020 which is discussed above. The other incident occurred in Madison Heights, Michigan, in October 2020. This incident involved anti-government "boogalooer" and convicted felon Eric Allport who was shot and killed during a shootout with FBI agents who were attempting to arrest him on federal weapons charges. One FBI agent was wounded in the shootout. Allport, who had a criminal history that included shooting at two Colorado officers in 2002, also had a peripheral connection to the infamous Ruby Ridge standoff.

Additionally, ADL documented more than 5,000 incidents of white supremacist propaganda distribution in the U.S. in 2020, compared to 2,724 in 2019. In 2020, ADL recorded 55 white supremacist propaganda incidents in Michigan, an increase from the 42 incidents recorded in 2019. These incidents can be found on ADL's H.E.A.T. (Hate, Extremism, Antisemitism, Terrorism) map.

"While it is a welcome sign that extremist-related murders decreased in 2020, the unprecedented violent and deadly insurrection we witnessed on January 6 in the nation's capital and other nonfatal but violent incidents reported in 2020 show that the threat of extremist violence remains an ever-present danger to society," said ADL CEO Jonathan Greenblatt. "As we saw in the Capitol violence just a few weeks ago, the far right is emboldened like never before."

The 2020 findings do not include the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol by insurrectionists, which was fueled by extremist conspiracy theories. In response to that event and the overall increase in domestic terrorism in recent years, ADL is announcing the PROTECT Plan to mitigate this threat while protecting civil liberties.

"It is important to remember that extremist murders represent merely the tip of a pyramid of extremist violence in the United States," Greenblatt said. "As ADL has documented, extremists engage in a wide variety of violent and criminal acts related to their causes, which is why our PROTECT Plan takes aim at violent conspiracies, hate attacks, terroristic threats, campaigns of intimidation and harassment, and other offenses."

In 2020, there was an absence of mass shooting sprees, such as the August 2019 white supremacist attack on a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, which resulted in 23 deaths. It is possible that fewer public gatherings may have discouraged mass shootings of that nature, as well as early intervention by law enforcement, which thwarted several terrorist plots in 2020. Last year was also the second year in a row during which there were no killings linked to domestic Islamist extremism.

The PROTECT Plan priorities include:

Adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to prevent and counter domestic terrorism while protecting civil liberties.

Passing the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act to authorize offices to address domestic terrorism and ensure those offices have resources proportionate to the threats.

Taking steps to ensure that individuals associated with violent extremist movements or engaged in violent extremist activity are deemed unsuitable for employment at the federal, state, and local levels – including law enforcement and military – and not given security clearances.

Funding civil society programs to address violent extremist radicalization and recruitment, while ensuring these programs do not stigmatize communities.

Investigate any complicity between social media companies and extremists, and make social media platforms more transparent and accountable for dangerous content.

In addition to advocating for action at the federal and state level, as well as at tech companies, ADL is harnessing its resources and expertise by raising awareness among policymakers, law enforcement, and supporters; building coalitions with diverse partners; gathering petition signatures; and publishing research on these issues.

ADL is a leading anti-hate organization. Founded in 1913 in response to an escalating climate of antisemitism and bigotry, its timeless mission is to protect the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment for all. Today, ADL continues to fight all forms of hate with the same vigor and passion. ADL is the first call when acts of antisemitism occur. A global leader in exposing extremism, delivering anti-bias education and fighting hate online, ADL's ultimate goal is a world in which no group or individual suffers from bias, discrimination, or hate. More at www.adl.org. ■

Rep. Elissa Slotkin wants to mandate Holocaust education in fight against domestic terrorism

Ron Kampeas, originally for the JTA

Rep. Elissa Slotkin, the Michigan Democrat who now chairs an influential anti-terrorism subcommittee, wants to mandate Holocaust education as a means of preventing domestic terrorism, citing the antisemitic symbols that appeared during the recent deadly Capitol raid.

Slotkin, giving her first news conference on Thursday as the chairwoman of the intelligence and counterterrorism subcommittee of the Homeland Security Committee, outlined an agenda that she said would be shaped by confronting domestic terrorism in the wake of the deadly Jan. 6 pro-Trump riot at the U.S. Capitol.

She said one of the things she wanted her subcommittee to "look at" was "mandatory Holocaust education."

"Right now it's only required in a certain number of states, I feel like it's like 15 or so," Slotkin, who is Jewish, said when asked to elaborate by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Local and state governments control curricula, but the federal government may effectively require some content by leveraging federal funds for schools.

"I support requiring it at the federal level because I walked through those crowds, the morning of the 6th, my husband walked me to work," Slotkin said of the day of the raid by Trump loyalists who sought to prevent Congress from affirming Joe Biden's election as president based on falsehoods peddled by Trump.

Rep. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) speaks at the podium standing with members of the Problem Solvers Caucus to praise the forthcoming passage of the bipartisan emergency COVID-19 relief bill in a press conference outside the US Capitol in Washington, DC on December 21, 2020.
PHOTO CAPTTION: CHERISS MAY/GETTY IMAGES VIA JTA)

"And we were walking through those crowds, and if you are not educated on the Holocaust, when you see something like a 'Camp Auschwitz' sweatshirt or a swastika or some of these tropes that have been around forever about wealthy Jews running the world, that kind of thing — if you don't know that as a historical legacy and connection to genocide, when you see it at a random protest you might not think it's that big of a deal," she said.

Slotkin was among the co-sponsors of legislation that passed last year that creates a clearinghouse of Holocaust resources for educators administered by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Slotkin is a rising star among Democrats, winning a sophomore term in a Michigan district that otherwise swings to Republicans. Her background in the CIA and on the White House National Security Council has made her one of the preeminent Democrats on security. ■

In Honor of Women's History Month

The Eastern Michigan University
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Mira Awad

A Concert / Conversation

Sunday, March 7 — 3 p.m. EST

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Israeli/Palestinian singer, songwriter, actress, artist, and content creator **Mira Awad** has been a forceful activist for women's rights, for equal citizenship for Palestinians living in Israel, for a two-state solution, and for environmental awareness. Her powerful advocacy for dialogue and co-existence, for peace and solidarity, has brought her considerable praise (and some criticism) across the political spectrum.

Ms. Awad competed in the 2009 Eurovision song contest alongside Israeli singer, Noa (Achinoam Nini). The duo won the NIF Human Rights for Arts and Culture award in 2010. She continues to work in collaboration with a multitude of artists, including guitarist Shay Alon, with whom she will perform this concert.

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Thank you to our sponsors!

This lecture is co-sponsored by Hillel at Eastern Michigan University, EMU Campus Life, the Academic Engagement Network, the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Michigan, the Jean and Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, and the Gayle & Larry Weiseneck Symposium Fund.

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Washtenaw County decriminalizes sex work

Hannah Davis, special to the WJN

On January 14, Washtenaw County's new prosecutor, Eli Savit, announced his office is decriminalizing "consensual sex work." This means that the office will decline to bring charges related to sex work, both involving buyers and sellers, though it will continue to charge sex-work-adjacent crimes, such as human trafficking, violence, and offenses involving children. "Sex work" is a broad term which can include anyone whose work involves sexually explicit behavior, including prostitutes, escorts, exotic dancers, and pornography actors (in this case the policy is focusing on prostitution, and this article uses the two terms interchangeably).

Prostitution is still technically a crime; however, the county prosecutor has latitude to decide which crimes to bring charges for. Savit's office has been enacting a number of similar policy changes recently, announcing that it will also decline to charge certain offenses related to cannabis, the use of entheogenic plants (i.e. natural psychedelics), buprenorphine, and contraband cases arising from "pretext stops" (situations where a police officer stopped a person supposedly for a minor infraction, but was really trying to find drugs or other contraband). The broad theme of these policies has been to address the disproportionate effects the justice system has had on marginalized populations. They also aim to reduce the risk and harm of drug use and sex work, without placing judgment on someone for taking part.

Savit pledged to enact many of these policies during his election campaign, and has been working with a transition team of community members and subject matter experts. In addition, he and several other members of the Washtenaw County justice system organized listening sessions last year to hear from members of the community about their priorities.

Decriminalization is still a fairly new idea: while it is gaining interest worldwide, most countries still view prostitution as a crime. However, there are some case studies which support the move. The state of Rhode Island, in an attempt to crack down on prostitution, accidentally legalized indoor sex work for several years until the law was reversed in 2009. A study of the effects of this change has shown that during that period, female gonorrhea rates dropped 40% statewide and reported rapes dropped 30%, while levels of other crime or violence stayed the same and there were no corresponding changes in neighboring states.

New Zealand enacted a law in 2003 to "decriminalize prostitution … ; create a framework to safeguard the human rights of sex workers and protect them from exploitation; promote the welfare and occupational health and safety of sex workers; contribute to public health; and prohibit the use in prostitution of persons under 18 years of age." A report five years later looked at the outcomes of the law in terms of the number of sex workers as well as their reported safety and working conditions. It concluded that "On the whole, the PRA [Prostitution Reform Act] has been effective in achieving its purpose, and the Committee is confident that the vast majority of people involved in the sex industry are better off under the PRA than they were previously." It did caution that many sex workers were still vulnerable to "exploitative employment conditions" and that there had been reports of some sex workers being forced to take clients against their will. The committee looked at underage prostitution as well, and concluded that while it was still an extant issue, the law had not increased the number of underage prostitutes. It appears that the law on its own has limited effect on many issues in the space of prostitution, despite improvements.

The new Washtenaw county policy continues in this vein, aiming to make sex workers safer in advocating for themselves, remove the risk of getting arrested in the course of their work, and make it easier for them to leave sex work. Sex workers, some of whom make the choice to enter the profession out of desperation and only want to do so for a limited time, frequently encounter hurdles in attempts to find other work due to their criminal records; trafficking victims may escape only to be arrested for something they were forced to do. Without the need to operate in a black market, sex workers should experience less risk.

While a policy like this can have an impact, Savit emphasized that there is a limit to the difference law enforcement can make overall. As shown in New Zealand, decriminalization did not eliminate the dangers of sex work, and the work of the prosecutor is mainly reactive, not preventative. Other organizations or areas of government, says Savit, need to take steps to support survivors and prevent trafficking from occurring in the first place. They should also work to increase options and accessibility to the things vulnerable people need to survive, so that sex work is engaged in consensually and not as a last resort.

There has been some pushback to the new Washtenaw policy. The Michigan H.E.A.T. Coalition, along with members of the Michigan Abolitionist Project and the SOAP (Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution) Project, have started a petition stating that the policy is harmful and will increase sex trafficking in the county by increasing overall demand for prostitution, and that Savit should have included survivors of trafficking in his policy development. The organizers, including several who are themselves trafficking survivors, are advocates for the Equality Model, which specifically criminalizes the buyers of sex while protecting sex workers themselves. They argue that with less demand, the supply of sex work will also drop, and trafficking along with it.

Many discussions on how to best tackle trafficking focus on whether it is moral to buy sex and whether it is possible to practice sex work safely at all. These questions are outside the scope of this article, which instead focuses on the outcomes of various policies. One key outcome-based argument from supporters of the Equality Model is that it is incredibly difficult to define "consensual sex work." Many times, victims of trafficking will not identify as such, whether because they don't believe they're being trafficked or because they do not feel safe saying so. In practice, this makes it hard to prosecute the perpetrators of trafficking. In addition, Equality Model advocates argue that almost all prostitutes are trafficked, in which case it makes sense to target buyers directly. However, this statistic is difficult to validate: some studies show that between 10–20% of sex workers are trafficked. In addition, while many adult sex workers were trafficked as children, and many say they would like to leave sex work, the barriers they face are often economic, not coercive.

The Equality Model is similar to policies enacted in Sweden criminalizing sex buyers, where some sources state that the laws reduced the number of street sex workers in the country by 50%, although the accuracy of these claims has been challenged. Research is unclear overall on the effects of either full decriminalization or the Equality Model on the demand for prostitution or the amount of trafficking, as accurate counts of the size of the sex trade before and after policies are enacted are difficult to obtain.

Criminalizing buyers may have unintended negative effects on safety, due to the growing incidence of sex work being arranged online. Buyers who fear legal consequences may be more likely to disguise their identity, which makes it harder for sex workers to vet them and may make the sex worker more vulnerable to violence and less able to insist on condom usage. In addition, punitive approaches may not be a deterrent at all: an East London study of sex buyers found that few men held criminal sanctions as relevant to their decision.

Despite these differing approaches and research conclusions, there is considerable room for agreement amongst all parties. Most groups involved in the issues of sex work and trafficking agree that policies that avoid arresting sex workers are good. They also agree that this is not a problem which can be addressed solely with police and courts. There are many reasons people enter and stay in sex work: they may have few options to earn money otherwise; children with unstable home lives may be more vulnerable to being trafficked; and many people who want to leave have difficulty doing so. Both Savit and the members of the Michigan H.E.A.T. Coalition emphasize the need for broader social support for women and other marginalized groups vulnerable to trafficking or likely to enter sex work, including providing housing, counseling for victims, training and support for those trying to leave sex work, and education in recognizing and preventing trafficking. Savit emphasized an open offer to work with community partners on next steps in this space.

Some innovative approaches outside of the legal space show promise, as well. An experiment in West Bengal, India, where sex workers themselves organized collectively into a committee covering about 85% of sex workers in the state, showed remarkable success in combating the issue of underage and coerced prostitution. The sex worker collective was able to quickly identify new entrants in the community, give them counseling and interview them to determine whether they were there willingly, and help them return home or to a safe location if they were trafficked. They also have a number of community development projects to reduce dependence on sex work and create security for those who choose to stay in the profession. The results of the experiment are dramatic: since the program has been in place, the proportion of minors in the district has declined over 90%, condom use increased from <3% to 87%, and syphilis and HIV prevalence are drastically lower in that state than elsewhere in India. This suggests that the most powerful approaches are not punitive but rather are driven by sex workers themselves, focusing on their needs first. ■

Washtenaw County commissioners support forgiveness of jail debt

Stephanie Glass, special to the WJN

Moving quickly ahead into a new year and Board term, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners met virtually on February 3 to approve a series of five resolutions, including supporting the County Sherriff's Office plan to forgive the debt of certain jail accounts.

County Sherriff Jerry Clayton was present at the meeting to share further context regarding his office's decision to forgive jail debts incurred between January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2020, which account for around thirty one thousand individuals and half a million dollars. Clayton shared, perhaps in anticipation of heard or unheard criticism regarding how this money could be brought into the county as opposed to being forgiven, that his office has "never aggressively gone out and pursued this debt in terms of sending information to creditors or damaging people's credits rating" and the "likelihood of collecting this money is minimal." Instead, this resolution is being framed as a public notice to "ease people's angst and anxiety around having this debt hang over their head."

Commissioner Jason Morgan (District 8) expressed his gratefulness in "having a Sherriff that is forward thinking and focused on equity." Commissioner Ricky Jefferson (District 6) also acknowledged his thanks, sharing that this resolution was "definitely needed" and moves Washtenaw County forward in being "justice minded." ■

Federation welcomes JCLP intern Ezra Brown

Rachel Wall, special to the WJN

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor is delighted to welcome Ezra Brown as a graduate student intern from the University of Michigan's Jewish Communal Leadership Program (JCLP) in the School of Social Work. Ezra is in his first year of the master's degree program, in the Management and Leadership Pathway. He graduated from UM in Spring 2020 with a bachelor's in Political Science, minoring in Judaic Studies.

Ezra Brown

Originally from Evanston, Illinois, Brown comes to this internship with experience in both Jewish Federation work and nonprofit fundraising. As a high school student, he participated in the Lewis Summer Internship Program at Chicago's Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. There, he learned about Jewish Federations through support and cultivation of community volunteers. As an undergraduate student, he completed UM's Development Summer Internship Program, where he was based in the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Students in JCLP earn a certificate of Jewish Communal Leadership along with a Master's of Social Work. In addition to the regular social work curriculum, JCLP students take classes in Judaic Studies and a professional seminar that examines the most pressing issues of Jewish communal life.

Brown's internship at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor will support his learning towards a career in nonprofit fund development. "I am eager to utilize fundraising as a means to give more people opportunities and close the income inequality gap," Brown says about his social work-inspired career goals.

Over the course of the coming year, Brown will support efforts of the Jewish Community Foundation (the planned giving arm of the Federation) and the Federation's database management and reporting, and work with various Federation engagement groups. Brown can be reached at interns@jewishannarbor.org. ■

Jewish Federation opens nominations for board and other positions

Eileen Freed, special to the WJN

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor invites community members to express their interest in volunteer leadership positions for 2021–2022. Along with its professional team, Federation volunteers address the most significant issues facing the Jewish community. The Governance Committee of the Federation's Board seeks to engage people from across the community as committee volunteers, chairs, and board members.

The ideal Federation volunteers have — and seek to further develop — skills in communications, fundraising, community-building, allocations, and event planning. Board members in particular gain a strong perspective on the overall needs of the community and work creatively internally and with counterparts in other organizations to address them.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor provides and inspires philanthropic leadership and community-building to nurture a strong, engaged, connected, vibrant, and enduring Jewish community locally, in Israel, and around the world. Federation relies on the generous time of community volunteers to achieve its goals.

"I have gained so much from my involvement with Federation, and I wish to share that experience with as many others who may have interest in our community and are seeking ways to productively channel it," says current Federation President Randy Milgrom. "We have a diverse and engaged and vibrant board, and I hope not only to strengthen it, but to continue to provide a pipeline for new and young leaders well into an even more secure future for our community."

The Jewish Federation's most well-known function is the Annual Community Campaign, which raises crucial, unrestricted funds our partner organizations need to operate, so they can focus on their missions serving the community. Fundraising beyond the Annual Community Campaign enables organizations to tackle specific challenges, such as to improve building security, maintain staffing during COVID, and address social service needs.

In addition to fundraising to meet current needs, the planned giving arm of the Federation, the Jewish Community Foundation, provides donors the opportunity to endow organizations and programs they love and through LIFE & LEGACY® is helping build a culture of legacy giving across the community.

Federation works to engage the community with programs such as Jewish Young Professionals, Women's Philanthropy, and Israel programming. Other engagement initiatives include Partnership2Gether, which connects local community members to Israelis in Moshav Nahalal; and the Jewish Community Relations Committee, which provides a platform for interaction with other faith, ethnic, and civic communities in Washtenaw County and an opportunity to be present in broader communal issues as part of the Jewish community.

From its unique position, the Jewish Federation convenes the community around issues of importance to a strong communal infrastructure. This includes addressing communal security needs, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for people of all abilities and backgrounds, and — most recently — providing resources and the space to collaborate to face the challenges posed by the COVID pandemic.

Serving as a Federation volunteer means giving a few hours of your time on a regular basis to strengthen and enrich Jewish life locally and around the world. It is an opportunity to learn and grow as a leader and to have one's voice heard in shaping community for the next generation.

Individuals interested in serving on a committee or on the Federation Board of Directors should contact Eileen Freed at 734-773-3537 or eileenfreed@jewishannarbor.org. For more information about Federation, visit www.jewishannarbor.org. ■

Chef Michael Solomonov just in time for Passover

Rachel Wall, special to the WJN

Following two extremely successful events featuring James Beard Award-Winning Chef Michael Solomonov in September and December 2020, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor will welcome the Philadelphia-based chef back to town for a third virtual event, on the evening of Sunday, March 21.

Michael Solomonov

Just before Rosh Hashanah, Federation hosted Chef Solomonov for the first in a three-part series of entertaining cooking demonstrations, followed by a Hanukkah-themed demonstration in December 2020. These events were held in appreciation of those who made a gift or pledge to the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's Annual Community Campaign.

Solomonov, Head Chef at Israeli-themed restaurant Zahav, offered a demonstration of multiple recipes for participants to try at home in advance of each holiday, including honey-glazed chicken for Rosh Hashanah and sfenj, a Moroccan donut, for Hanukkah.

Solomonov's appearance is a collaboration between the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor and 32 other Jewish Federations across the country. While a program like this would have been cost-prohibitive to the Ann Arbor community if held in person, digital platforms have provided increased opportunity for community engagement over the last several months. More than 200 local community members registered for the Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah events.

To add some personal flavor to the nationwide effort, the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor held a private celebration before each cooking demonstration, open to all who contributed to the local Annual Community Campaign. This "Happy Half Hour" utilized Zoom's Breakout Rooms function to allow participants to congregate in small groups. The groups were randomly assigned, so attendees connected both with old friends and members of the community they didn't previously know. Many who participated found themselves wanting more than the allotted 10 minutes to share what they appreciate about the local Ann Arbor area community and to enjoy one another's company.

The March event with Chef Solomonov will feature a special Sephardic Passover dish called mina — a savory matzah pie stuffed with juicy ground beef (or eggplant, potatoes, spinach, or cheese for vegetarians). Leaving nothing to the traditional, Chef Solomonov's version includes coffee and cardamom spice, and is topped with Passover charoset.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor provides and inspires philanthropic leadership and community building to nurture a strong, engaged, connected, vibrant, and enduring community locally, in Israel and around the world. The cooking demonstration with Chef Solomonov will be open to and in appreciation of donors to Federation's 2021 Annual Community Campaign. Like last fall's events, the Greater Ann Arbor community will have an opportunity to gather for a local appreciation before the cooking demonstration begins. There is no cost to attend the event for donors to the 2021 Campaign.

For more information or to register for the event, visit www.jewishannarbor.org/event/solomonov-passover or contact Federation's Communications & Development Manager Rachel Wall at rachel@jewishannarbor.org or (734) 773-3533. ■

Jewish women to partner with The Last Word bar for March 18 event

Rachel Wall, special to the WJN

After nearly a year of living in the pandemic, women of all ages are feeling the strain of maintaining daily life and staying connected with one another. That's why the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor invites Jewish women in the Ann Arbor area to take an evening to relax with a drink and enjoy time socializing with other women.

On March 18 at 7:30 p.m., the Women's Division of the Jewish Federation will gather for an event called Schmooze and Booze: A Virtual Mixer with In-Person Drinks. With ample time allotted to chatting and connecting with Jewish women across the community, the event will feature a bartender from The Last Word bar to walk participants through mixing their own craft cocktails.

Known for its extensive and creative cocktail menu, The Last Word is a speakeasy-style bar hidden away at the corner of Huron and 1st Street in downtown Ann Arbor. They've offered pickup and delivery services for months, but Federation is proud to engage them for this event uniquely adapted to a hybrid virtual/in-person space.

The event will take place entirely on Zoom, but it will be complemented by real supplies in each participant's home. Everyone who registers will receive a package, delivered in advance, containing ingredients to mix their own craft cocktails. Packages will also include snacks and a fun keepsake of the evening. Tickets cost just $36.

Building on the success of a wine and cheese tasting event in January 2020, this year's Schmooze and Booze aims to once again bring together Jewish women across generations. Women who are retired and thinking about grandchildren will be able to connect meaningfully with young mothers and women just beginning their careers. In a time when so many are feeling isolated, Federation hopes to offer an fun, easy way for Jewish women in the Ann Arbor area to feel a sense of community for at least one evening.

The planning committee for this event includes: Joelle Abramowitz, Sassa Akervall, Lara Kross, Susan Rebner, Leora Rubin, Marci Sukenic, Alyse Tankanow, and Sarajane Winkelman.

Event registration closes March 5. To register, visit JewishAnnArbor.org/Event/WomenMixing. For questions, contact Federation's Communications & Development Manager Rachel Wall at rachel@jewishannarbor.org or (734) 773-3533. . ■

Gugulethu Moyo is the new executive director of the Tucson Jewish History Museum/Holocaust History Center. **Continues from page 9**

tinue with the mission of the museum, which is to tell the story of Jewish experience in this particular region and also to place our history alongside the history of others, to make connections between the things we have experienced as Jews with the experience of others in our wider community."

Tucson, with a population of about 540,000, is less than an hour's drive from the Mexico border and is considered the birthplace of the "sanctuary" movement to provide refuge for immigrants fleeing persecution in Central America. The Jewish museum recently launched a membership initiative called the Compelling Futures Collective that it says will be a "multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-gender, intergenerational, cross-class Jewish community … serving as a voice of conscience and resisting anti-Semitism and xenophobia with clarity and integrity."

Melissa Martens Yaverbaum, executive director of the Council of American Jewish Museums, said she sees Moyo as an inspiring leader at a time when the role of Jewish museums is evolving.

"Gugulethu is a thought leader in the dialogue surrounding American Jewish museums," Yaverbaum said. "She contributes new, thoughtful directions for museums seeking societal change, and will help us find our way as we aim to heal communities in these challenging times."

Moyo will draw on her diverse experiences to chart that course — starting with her own childhood in Zimbabwe.

"One of my earliest childhood memories is of fleeing home in 1983 and 1984 when I was 6 years old and going into hiding during the Gukurahundi atrocities in which some 20,000 people from my ethnic group, Ndebele, were murdered," she said.

The massacres, which stemmed from a rivalry between political parties, are classified as a genocide by the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

"I grew up understanding that people in power can decide they want to wipe out a group of people who are government opponents or people from a different ethnic group — whatever the cause of the hatred is, they can eliminate the other group," Moyo said.

Moyo, 45, is the daughter of an internationally recognized scholar on post-conflict constitution-making who now teaches at Cornell Law School. She saw becoming a lawyer as a way to work for democratic change in Zimbabwe and earned a bachelor of law degree from the University of Zimbabwe Harare in 1996. After serving as executive assistant to the CEO at Zimbabwe's mining industry pension fund, Moyo earned another bachelor of law degree from the University of Oxford in England.

Returning to Zimbabwe, she was in-house counsel at Zimbabwe's only independent newspaper, coordinating a team of lawyers challenging the government's campaign to censor and shut down independent media. In 2003, she was beaten and jailed amid a crackdown on the press and political opposition in an incident that drew international attention.

"Sadly, things haven't improved," she said about Zimbabwe.

Leaving Zimbabwe, Moyo became a program lawyer and media relations adviser for the International Bar Association in London. Five years later she launched Media Defence, the first legal aid organization dedicated to defending media freedom worldwide.

Moyo said she sees a clear connection between that work and the role that Holocaust museums can play.

"A lot of the work human rights lawyers do, and human rights defenders do, would not be necessary, I think, if people were educated about rights, and about tolerance, and difference," she said.

Moyo began exploring Judaism as a young adult, inspired by learning about the many human rights lawyers in South Africa who represented Black anti-apartheid activists there. She cited George Bizos, a non-Jewish refugee from the Nazis who attended Jewish schools in South Africa and later was part of Nelson Mandela's legal team in the trial that resulted in his 27-year imprisonment, as a particular inspiration, as well as Albie Sachs, a Jewish attorney who was forced into exile because of his opposition to apartheid but later helped write South Africa's post-apartheid constitution and served on its top court. (Sachs has agreed to deliver a lecture for the museum this spring.)"

Then, in 2003, Moyo met the man who would become her husband, Joshua Polacheck, then in the U.S. Foreign Service and posted to the U.S. Embassy in Harare. Polacheck, who is Jewish, had spent part of his childhood living on Native American reservations with his parents, health care workers in the Indian Health Service, before settling in Tucson as a teen.

In 2011, Moyo and Polacheck were living in Washington, D.C., where they became involved with the Sixth & I synagogue. Senior Rabbi Shira Stutman said she came to know Moyo as "a deeply connected Jew, a creative and brilliant thinker, and an eternal learner. She has an expansive heart and a curious mind."

Stutman said one of her favorite memories of Moyo, who formally converted with Stutman's support, actually came after the couple left Washington.

"I have so many stories to tell of traveling to Israel together, studying Torah or just laughing over one thing or another," Stutman said. "But one of my favorite Gugu stories is of the year she decided to take the Sixth & I adult b'nai mitzvah course. Midway through the year she and her husband moved to New Delhi, where he had been sent by the Foreign Service. But she was so committed to taking the class that she would get up at 4:30 a.m. to Skype in!

"We still miss her and Joshua here in D.C., but are so happy they've landed somewhere that they all can thrive."

Although Jewish tradition discourages asking if someone is a Jew by choice, Moyo said she welcomes questions about her path to Judaism.

"The tradition of not asking is a comfortable one and a good one," she said, but at the same time, not telling stories about people who become converts, and why, can mean missing an opportunity to educate about the array of Jewish experiences.

"At this point, when we're all talking about inclusivity, those stories should be told," she said, adding that what is uncomfortable is when people ask "because they think you are not Jewish, because they make assumptions about what a Jewish person looks like."

Those assumptions, Moyo said, are exactly the sort that the museum will aim to dispel under her leadership.

"I am particularly interested in perhaps complicating the story that we tell about Jewish identity," she said.

Moyo also draws inspiration from stories on her husband's side of the family. His father was a civil rights activist, arrested and beaten in Mississippi in 1964. His grandfather, Walter Polacheck — their 6-year-old daughter's great-grandfather, she notes — was a physician serving in the U.S. Army in World War II. After the war in Europe he was sent to Nuremberg, where he treated the Nazi leaders on trial for war crimes.

"This is history we talk about in our family often and reflect on, and also what must have been a really complicated experience to be a Jewish American soldier" at that time and place, with many of his own extended family wiped out in the Holocaust, she said.

The family included several Holocaust survivors until recently, she said, adding that "There are a lot of very personal reasons why this work matters."

An extended version of this story originally appeared in the Arizona Jewish Post.

Correction (Feb. 8, 2020): This story originally described George Bizos as a Jewish Holocaust survivor. It has been corrected to show that he was not. ■

Uniting to secure a bright Jewish future at JFNA's Virtual Mission to Washington

Stephanie Glass, special to the WJN

On February 1 and 2, the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) held its first-ever Virtual Mission to Washington D.C. Bringing together over 3,500 participants from Jewish communities around the country, including greater Ann Arbor, the mission connected individuals with political leaders and policymakers from both sides of the aisle. The bipartisan mission focused on three central areas: ensuring government resources for the institutions that keep Jewish life flourishing, advancing laws that fight antisemitism and uphold a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, and partnering to help maintain safe, inclusive, and resilient communities.

Through programming like "Strategies and Resources for Protecting the Jewish Community," participants were able to hear directly from lawmakers. This included Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina who spoke about the steps Congress is taking to ensure faith-based communities, particularly the Jewish community, have the resources needed to protect against and respond to extremist threats. One of the central resources discussed is the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), a FEMA grant that provides support to nonprofit organizations at high risk of a terrorist attack. "Our Greater Ann Arbor community directly benefited from the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which will have a huge impact on the safety and security of our community. This past September, through NSGP applications we submitted, two local organizations were awarded over $113,000 in funds to make security upgrades recommended by the Secure Community Network. Without the NSGP grants, it would have taken significant community resources and time to raise these funds. It is critical that the Nonprofit Security Grant Program not only continue but be expanded upon. I am thankful for JFNA bringing the issues of the Jewish community to the forefront through this Virtual Mission" says Eileen Freed, Executive Director of the Federation and Virtual Mission participant.

JFNA has long advocated for Jewish communal priorities through its Washington D.C. office, ensuring the interests of its 146 Jewish Federations and 300-plus network communities are shared with members of Congress and the administration. The recent success of JFNA's advocacy efforts include lobbying in support of the CARES Act and expanding eligibility and increased funding for the Paycheck Protection Program. These efforts directly benefited thousands of Jewish nonprofits, including Federations, JCCs, and synagogues. Through the free-of-charge Virtual Mission, the various communities making up JFNA's network were able to directly experience these robust advocacy efforts, a chance many, especially those in smaller Jewish communities, may not normally have had due to the distance and expense of traveling to the nation's capital.

The Virtual Mission's activities continued beyond the busy programming schedule. Throughout the day, mission participants received text messages highlighting JFNA's 2021 policy agenda, which includes allocating more funds to help Holocaust survivors and developing a comprehensive plan to combat the rise of antisemitic incidents. The texts provided a link easily connecting individuals to their representatives through a pre-written email detailing needs and proposed action steps. These grassroots efforts highlight to lawmakers how important these issues are to their local communities and reinforce the impressive advocacy work being done by JFNA's government relations professionals.

While 2021 continues to carry the challenges brought forth in 2020, the Virtual Mission served as a welcome and needed reminder on how collective action can bring about substantial change, an example long illustrated by the American Jewish community.

Visit www.jewishtogether.org/take-action to discover ways you can help promote JFNA's policy agenda and make your voice heard. ■

Looking for Rose: Conversation with my father

Clare Kinberg, 15th installment in a series

I didn't know until after my father's death in 1975 that his sister Rose had been excised from my Ashkenazi Jewish family after she married a non-Jewish Black man sometime in the 1930s. I never met Rose, nor did I ever speak about her to my father or any of his other siblings. All of them have now passed away.

Finding little bits and pieces of Rose's life is solitary work; I'm alone with shadows.

When I'm deep into the writing of this story, and still exploring how to tell it, chance encounters will sometimes open a window. I recently attended a public lecture on the 12th century Jewish philosopher Maimonides given by a family friend, Dr. Bernie Steinberg. When Bernie delineated Maimonides' process for having necessary conversations about hurt, of moving forward from damage, with love, he seemed to be talking directly to me.

Bernie translates Maimonides' advice on criticizing a friend's behavior into everyday English: First, name the hurt; do not ignore or bury it. If a friend (or family member) does damage, the mitzvah, according to Maimonides, is to enable the person to repair the hurt. Ask them, why did you do this? Then, if there is sincere regret, and the person asks forgiveness, they should be forgiven. If there is no regret, go back to the person again and again, and then move on. However, there is no good purpose in shaming the wrongdoer.

I'm trying to have this conversation with my father, who died 45 years ago. The deeper I get into the story of his sister Rose, the closer I get to naming the damage caused by his racism and the hurt I feel that my father, rather than being repelled by racial prejudice, adopted the racist's ugly ways. My writing this story is helping me to name the hurt. I try to understand why Rose wasn't a part of our family's life. What can I do with the regret I feel? Can I name the wrong with hope rather than shame?

My intention to absolutely reject the racism I'd grown up with has also included jettisoning much of the biblical and prophetic texts that form the backbone of Jewish tradition. The texts are so peppered with racism and misogyny as to be, it seemed to me, irredeemable. As a parent and teacher, I often invent new stories, based on the biblical ones — stories that include active and named women, for example, and that exclude the God-directed genocide of non-Israelite tribes. I balk at telling my kids what's really written on the parchment of the ancient texts.

But as I tell my family's story, I'm learning to approach my inheritances, personal and communal, in a new way. Rabbi Jason Rubenstein and Dr. Judith Plaskow, contemporary Jewish religious commentators on text, urge me to say the words that are plainly written, even if terrible. In her essay "Preaching Against the Text,"

Plaskow writes, "Remaining silent about the negative aspects of tradition not only leaves them to do their work in the world, it also deprives us of an important spiritual resource." Plaskow concludes, "I do not believe that we have any choice other than to make choices about what we accept and repudiate in tradition. But we do have a choice as to whether we leave the negative to do its silent, poisonous work like an old family secret, or whether we turn and grapple with ambiguity and ugliness, and force them to yield up meaning. Confronting the hard places in tradition and in our lives is neither comfortable nor easy."

In Deuteronomy, the last book of the Torah, it is written that Moses says, "In the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them — the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites — as the Lord your God has commanded you." When I began teaching religious school in the 1980s, I would not read this text to my students, but rather I would assign my students to research the ancient peoples the Israelites lived among. Who were the Hittites, etc.? Now I am asking, what more can I learn from the revulsion I feel when reading these words? As I write my family's history, can I somehow repair the damage?

When I was growing up in the white suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri, our family's social circle was completely Jewish. When I was seven (1962) and Black families had started moving into our near-to-the-city neighborhood, my family joined the flight to a solidly white suburb further west. In this newly built subdivision in an unincorporated area near Creve Coeur, about half the families were Jewish, and I knew each one. Some had lived on the same blocks as my father when he was a kid.

I don't remember ever having non-Jews as guests in our home. It was an unstated norm. But the separation from African Americans was different. While several Black men worked for my father in his used machinery business and Black women occasionally cleaned our house, my father instructed my siblings and I to never bring a Black friend into our home. My father's racism stunned me, drove an unbreachable wedge between us, and influenced me in ways I struggle to unravel. Its bitterness mystified me, which in turn created an ill-defined edge to my rebellion against both him and the racism that permeated everything around us.

My father was certainly not alone in enforcing strict racial segregation. He was among the majority of white Americans. There is no point to shaming him, even regret is pointless. But telling the story over and over — looking for meaning — is the way of my people.

While my father strived to surround his children with familiar white Jewish families, his sister Rose had moved from St. Louis to Chicago's Black Belt, the near south side area of the city that was home to 90% of Chicago's Black residents. I've spent years reading about Chicago in the early 1940s, trying to get a feel for the complex, roiling currents that were formed when African Americans from all parts of the South pulled up stakes and relocated to the Windy City on Lake Michigan.

In 1910, Chicago's Black population had been 44,000. By 1940 when Rose and Mr. A moved there, the Black population of Chicago had grown seven fold to about 280,000. Yet, during those thirty years of growth, the area allowed to Chicago's Black citizens expanded little and became increasingly crowded. In order to make room for the people pouring into Chicago, former single family homes were divided into several "kitchenettes," small apartments with shared bathrooms: just the kind of apartment three generations of the Younger family in Lorraine Hansberry's groundbreaking play "A Raisin in the Sun" lived in, and wanted to escape from.

White Chicagoans did not only flee to the suburbs, as my family had. They used any means necessary to maintain racial segregation in housing. The thrown bricks, bombings, fires, and beatings that accompanied any attempt of Black families to move beyond certain confines were recorded in *The Chicago Defender* and several other Black newspapers.

In the play "A Raisin in the Sun," the white "neighborhood improvement association" offered to pay the working class Youngers to not move into the house they'd purchased with the elder Mr. Younger's life insurance policy. The playwright had refracted traumatic incidents from her own family's lives. When Lorraine was a young teen she had been almost killed by a block of cement thrown through the window of the home her father had purchased in a previously all-white neighborhood just south of Washington Park, less than 10 blocks from the kitchenette where Rose and Mr. A were living.

The once-upon-a-time single family home at 5168 S. Michigan Avenue where Rose and Mr. A lived had been divided into kitchenettes for seven families. In a 2003 *Chicago Tribune* article about properties designated to be torn down I found this about the building they lived in: "To be sure, some orange-rated buildings are too far gone to save, such as the once grand, 117-year-old Victorian home at 5168 S. Michigan Ave. Though it retains its fanciful turret, it looks like something out of a gothic novel, with broken windows and rickety front steps. A request to demolish the structure is pending." In the 1980s, it had been listed on a register of historic Washington Park structures; it has since been replaced with condos. ■

Stronger together, for our future

By Laurie Greenberg

"The good we do does live after us, and it is by far the most important thing that does." Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

The Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor is one of eleven local Jewish agencies and synagogues proud to participate in the LIFE & LEGACY® program.

This LIFE & LEGACY initiative is an incredible and meaningful program developed and supported by The Harold Grinspoon Foundation and facilitated by our own Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor.

Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor was eager to participate in this special program that will enable all of the generous past, present, and future supporters of HDS to leave a legacy gift to HDS. Together, these generous gifts build an endowment that helps to ensure that HDS remains a vibrant, strong Ann Arbor Jewish institution for years to come. This program provides the HDS community a unique and straightforward means to demonstrate deep gratitude for the school by simply committing to designate a portion of a will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy towards the future of HDS.

HDS has been responsible for helping shape the hearts and minds of children in the Ann Arbor Jewish community for over 40 years. Well beyond a typical education, it has been instrumental in teaching our children the core values of what it means to be a Jew, and how to be principled, ethical, passionate, intellectually curious, and thoughtful.

My husband and I feel a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunities that Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor provided our children and our family. We have created life-

long friendships while our children gained a strong appreciation for their Jewish roots and experienced an exemplary education. We view this legacy commitment as an opportunity to be a part of something larger than ourselves. It requires zero financial obligation during our lifetime yet still allows us to build towards the future sustainability of HDS that we may not be in a position to do today.

Because of the impact that HDS has had on our family, we have already completed a "Letter of Intent," promising a portion of our finances to be given back to the community after our passing. My husband and I wanted to ensure that for generations to come, the Hebrew Day School will be able to thrive and provide meaningful moments to many future generations of Jewish families. ■

Hillel Café launches three new programs

Stacy Carroll, special to the WJN

The Hillel Café at Michigan Hillel continues to reinvent its menu offerings to make their homemade, healthy, and kosher options fully accessible to students and community members throughout the week. Working within the most recent health and safety guidelines, Chef Jonathan Shepard recently launched several new programs that are all no-contact, pick-up friendly. These include a new Take & Bake program, Friday Shabbat Dinners, and Pop-Up Café specials.

Through Take & Bake diners may purchase individual meals ($15) or family-style meals for four ($48), which are fully cooked and ready to reheat and serve. Each meal comes complete with the diner's choice of entree, two sides, a soup or salad option, and a challah roll. This program is open for all to enjoy Monday through Thursday, with just one hour's notice prior to pick up. Most recently featured items on the Take & Bake menu have been Israeli chicken with a tomato and olive sauce, honey-orange glazed salmon, lemon-paprika herbed chicken, and more.

With great success, The Hillel Café has also begun to offer its Shabbat meals to community members. For $15 per meal, diners may choose from four entree options of beef, chicken, fish, and vegetarian, with set sides and a dessert. Orders must be received by the end of day Tuesday for no-contact pick up at Hillel on Friday afternoon. Early favorites from the Café this year have included Mongolian beef, traditional braised beef brisket, BBQ lentil-stuffed sweet potatoes, and seared Moroccan salmon.

And to keep us all on our toes, Chef Jonathan has started to host midweek Pop-Up Café events featuring one hot entree offered in limited quantities. Pop-Up meals are available on a first come, first serve basis.

Follow all of the Café's changing weekly menus through the University of Michigan Hillel Facebook page and new Instagram account exclusively for Hillel Café updates @HillelEats. Reserve Take & Bake and Shabbat meals at michiganhillel.org/dining and Pop Up Café specials at michiganhillel.org/popup. ■

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AARC events in March

The Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation is holding all of its events online. For more information about services or events or to receive Zoom links, please email aarcgillian@gmail.com. Visit the AARC website at aarecon.org.

Pre-Passover Workshops

Tech Tips for Leading Your Virtual Seder:
Learn some helpful tech tips for your seder from teachers who have been utilizing online technology throughout the pandemic.

How To Make Your Own Haggadah:
For those who are virtually hosting a seder this year, Deb Kraus will lead a class on how to make your own haggadah.

Passover Art and Midrash:
Artists Carol Levin and Idelle Hammond-Sass will lead an art and midrash workshop that will include expressive art-making and sharing focused on the Passover theme of "Dayenu."
To learn more about these online workshops, visit our website, aarecon.org.

Second Saturday Ta'Shma/Come and Learn: March 13
Ta'Shma and Shabbat Morning Service: "Pray What!?" Ta'Shma 10 a.m.
Shabbat services 10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Havdalah and Healing: Marking One Year of the Pandemic in Our Lives
Saturday March 13, 6:30–7:30 p.m.
Join AARC to mark the one-year anniversary of the pandemic with a ritual to hold our personal and collective losses and our hope for healing. We will mourn the loved ones we have lost, acknowledge the changes in our lives, and set hopes and intentions for healing and better days to come.

Fourth Friday Shabbat:
March 26th, 6:30 p.m.
Come connect with community, rest, recharge, rejuvenate. Everyone welcome.

AARC Community Book Club:
The next AARC book group meeting will take place on Sunday from 1–2:30 p.m. via Zoom, April 11. If you are interested in receiving the URL for the Zoom link, please email Greg Saltzman, gsaltzman@albion.edu.
Rabbi Ora will lead a discussion of Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy*, a 368-page nonfiction book about unfair treatment by the criminal justice system of those who are impoverished or black.

Shmita Year Workshops

Sunday March 21, noon

AARC and The Jewish Alliance for Food, Land and Justice are partnering with Ekar Farm and other national organizations to explore the connections between the biblical agricultural tradition of Shmita ("release") — the Sabbatical year — and contemporary issues of economic, environmental, immigration, and food justice. The next Shmita year begins in the fall of 2021.

In each program of a six-part series, we'll learn from national leaders in the first hour. In the second hour, we'll gather as a Washtenaw community (via Zoom) to unpack our reactions and consider their local significance. Register for the class (note the suggested donation of $18), and learn more about the partnership and upcoming programs on the Ekar Farm website, ekarfarm.org. For questions, contact Carole Caplan-Sosin at caplan.carole@gmail.com.

The second workshop in the series, Creating Economic Justice, will be Sunday, March 21, noon to 1 p.m. The speakers will be Greg Watson, Director of Policy and Systems Design at the Schumacher Center for a New Economics and Rabbi Rachel Kahn-Troster, Deputy Director, T'ruah.

Watson's work currently focuses on community food systems and the dynamics between local and geo-economic systems. Watson has spent nearly 40 years learning to understand systems thinking as inspired by Buckminster Fuller and to apply that understanding to achieve a just and sustainable world.

Rabbi Kahn-Troster is lead strategist on T'ruah's human rights campaigns. She heads the organizing and training of more than 2,000 rabbis and cantors. Since 2007 she has organized against U.S.-sponsored torture in the war on terror, initiated campaigns against human trafficking and forced labor, to end solitary confinement, to fight against mass incarceration, and for human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories. Rachel spearheads T'ruah's critical partnership with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida, and leads Jewish community in worker-led campaigns for corporate accountability. ■

AAOM's melave malka series

Robert Savit, special to the WJN

The Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan has organized a series of Saturday evening (melave malka) Zoom events, co-sponsored by Beth Israel Congregation, Temple Beth Emeth, and the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation. The presenters in this series all have connections to the Ann Arbor Jewish Community. The two that have already taken place, by Professor Zvi Gitelman, Emeritus Professor of Political Science at UM, and by Gavriel Savit, were recorded and are available to view at https://youtu.be/cEeG73S-gWqw (Gitelman) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D8Ufhv8ysU (Savit). A third event, in which Menachem Kaiser will talk about his new book *Plunder: A Memoir of Family Property and Nazi Treasure*, will take place on the evening of March 13 at 7:30 p.m. (To register for this event go to https://www.annarborminyan.org/ and click the registration link on the flyer for the event.)

Zvi Gitelman's presentation, "Can you know Yiddish without knowing Yiddishkeit," was a fascinating discussion of the ways in which traditional Jewish social and religious practices inform the idiomatic structure of Yiddish. For example, the Yiddish phrase which translates as "Noach with seven mistakes" takes on its rich, typically sarcastic Yiddish meaning only when you realize that in Hebrew and Yiddish Noach is spelled with only two letters. You have to really go out of your way to make seven mistakes when spelling "Noach." In this regard see also the wonderfully hilarious https://youtu.be/6gGzCok9swU by Yelena Shmulenson and Allen Lewis Rickman, which deals with the ways in which Jewish culture is expressed in Yiddish idioms.

The presentation by Gavriel Savit, an Ann Arbor native and graduate of Hillel Day School, Pioneer High School, and the University of Michigan Musical Theater Program, was a discussion of his new book *The Way Back*, a finalist for the 2020 National Book Award and winner of the Jewish Book Council 2020 Award for Young Adult Literature. *The Way Back* is a fantasy novel set in a 19th century shtetl, and is the story of two Jewish children, Bluma and Yehuda Leib, who both suffer losses of people close to them, and end up traveling to the Land of the Dead in a quest to reclaim the souls of their lost relatives. The children finally confront Death itself, and come to a deeper understanding of the role of Death in life. Aside from being a fantasy/adventure story full of conflict and demons, the book also raises profound philosophical and psychological questions. Savit discussed some of the personal experiences that influenced the book, as well as the relationship of elements of the book to aspects of Jewish folk culture, and to the structure and content of fantasy literature, in general.

On March 13, the AAOM series presents Menachem Kaiser who will talk about his new book, on sale March, 2021. Menachem Kaiser, a graduate of the University of Michigan's MFA writing program, is a Brooklyn-based writer whose work has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal, The Atlantic, New York, BOMB, Vogue*, and elsewhere. From the online book description: "Menachem Kaiser's brilliantly told story, woven from improbable events and profound revelations, is set in motion when the author takes up his Holocaust-survivor grandfather's former battle to reclaim the family's apartment building in Sosnowiec, Poland … A surprise discovery — that his grandfather's cousin not only survived the war, but wrote a secret memoir while a slave laborer in a vast, secret Nazi tunnel complex — leads to Kaiser being adopted as a virtual celebrity by a band of Silesian treasure seekers who revere the memoir as the indispensable guidebook to Nazi plunder … Kaiser immerses readers in profound questions that reach far beyond his personal quest." ■

Environmental education at AARC religious school

Gillian Jackson, special to the WJN

In the thoroughly Jewish spirit of making the best of a bad situation, the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation Beit Sefer religious school has taken the opportunity to move the classroom outside during the COVID-19 pandemic. Beit Sefer director Clare Kinberg has created a curriculum that encourages families to get outside for almost every holiday this year!

To open up the year, Beit Sefer took a virtual field trip to the Barn Sanctuary in Chelsea. As part of the Elul curriculum, lessons focused on compassionate care for the animals that humans rely on and how human activity affect the animals' environments. The kids learned about the care required to rehabilitate abused farm animals and had the opportunity to ask lots of questions!

For Sukkot, families were encouraged to visit a local congregant's sukkah. Families had the opportunity to shake the lulav and smell the citron on their own time, in a socially distanced fashion. In normal years, Beit Sefer families host an annual community campout for Sukkot. Allowing the children to have part of this experience was a very valuable way to bring familiarity to this strange year.

As a service project for Hanukkah, the school removed invasive plants from Mary Beth Doyle Park in Ann Arbor. This environmental education project taught students about the importance of native plants, and allowed them the opportunity to give during a time of year focused on receiving.

And finally, to celebrate Tu B'Shvat students independently partook in a Champion Tree Hunt! A Champion tree designation is awarded to the largest tree of a particular species in a given municipality. You can learn more about Ann Arbor's Champion trees on the city's website. Students were excited to learn that their neighborhoods were host to the largest tree of a given species in the entire city of Ann Arbor! Families learned about responsible forestry and the importance of maintaining a healthy forest ecosystem. During their visit, the kids took notice of the large size of the Champion trees and shared pictures.

The school plans to continue the theme of environmental education in its permanent curriculum. Beit Sefer focuses its curriculum on Jewish values and ethics, history, diversity, prayer, and Hebrew language. Emphasizing critical inquiry and self-expression, the school uses a project-based learning approach to stimulate students' creativity and involvement in Jewish community. If you would like to take part in this amazing year of environmental education or learn more about Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation's Beit Sefer program, please visit the website aarecon.org or email aarcgillian@gmail.com. ■

Pardes Hannah events in March

Pardes Hannah events take place in Zoom. All interested participants are welcome. Information, including Zoom links, on these or any of our ongoing services, rituals, circles, and teachings can be found on the Pardes Hannah website at https://pardeshannah.org/ or call Renee Robbins at 734-904-5459.

Chant Circle

Sunday, March 7

11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Using short scriptural texts, the Chant Circle will explore a theme, set personal intentions, chant, sit in silence, and reflect on the experience inwardly or by sharing. For information or questions, contact Linda Greene, lingreene@gmail.com.

Rosh Chodesh Nisan Online Minyan

Sunday, March 14

9–10:15 a.m.
Pardes Hannah's Rosh Chodesh Online Minyan meets monthly to celebrate the new moon, weaving davening with teachings from Kabbalah on the unique qualities of each Hebrew month, which offer special opportunities for inner reflection and spiritual growth. For more information, contact Gabrielle Pescadore, pescadorarte@gmail.com.

Zohar Study & Practice

Sunday, March 14

11 a.m.–1 p.m.
The focus of these sessions is the Zohar (The Book of Radiance), surely the central and most richly evocative work of Spanish Kabbalah. The purpose is to enable participants to learn how to read the Zohar and to enter its symbolic universe and hear its inner music. Text study will be enriched by conversation and spiritual practices. Texts will be provided in English, Aramaic, and Hebrew. For texts and questions, contact Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg, rebelliot91@gmail.com.

Rosh Chodesh Nisan Circle

Sunday, March 14

7–8:30 p.m.
The Rosh Chodesh Circle begins with rituals, chants, and setting of intentions, followed by delving into the Kabbalistic perception of the energy of the coming month. For more information, contact Lucinda Kurtz, lucinda@lucindakurtz.com.

Shabbat Morning Service

Saturday, March 20

10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Join Pardes Hannah for the opportunity to pray, chant, meditate, share, connect heart to heart, and celebrate the gift of Shabbat and Community. For questions, contact Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg, rebelliot91@gmail.com.

Sefirat ha-Omer

Sunday, March 28

7–7:30 p.m.
Join Pardes Hannah as we begin our counting of the Omer. ■

Jewish music with local roots: Aly Halpert

by Terri Ginsburg, special to the WJN

Ay Halpert is a talented singer, guitar player, song writer, and community builder who grew up in Ann Arbor and currently lives in Millerton, New York. Halpert writes songs on a variety of topics: politics including Black Lives Matter and a song about Trump, songs of healing, songs with Jewish content, and children's songs. Her songs are beautiful, sometimes humorous, and carry important messages for our times.

What struck me when I listened to her music is how she integrates Hebrew phrases from the liturgy, Jewish concepts, and niggunim (wordless melodies) into her songs. Halpert's songs are fresh and original, yet somehow feel very familiar because of their Jewish content. Aly takes a traditional prayer such as Modeh Ani (I thank you God) and puts it into feminine language (Modah Ani) making it more accessible to girls and women. She also refers to God as ruach, spirit, rather than the traditional word used, melech, which means king. The beautiful melody that she creates for the prayer gives it new energy.

As a former Jewish educator, I was delighted to hear the songs that Halpert wrote for children on the topics of Havdallah and Tu B'Shvat. It is exciting to have new songs written on these topics that will appeal to Jewish children. The other songs on her album for children, *Nipple Confusion*, reflect some of the less sung-about challenges in the lives of children. There is a song, "You Can Still Cry", about a child who is protesting being strapped into a car seat. Halpert explained that it is also about the importance of young people (and all of us) being able to feel our feelings, whether they are about seemingly small things or big things.

Halpert's Jewish background is varied. She enjoyed her experience at Beth Israel Religious School and was involved with the Jewish community at Oberlin College. It was during a seder there that she began a journey of understanding the vast implications of Judaism that could be used to make the world better. Halpert built on this with four summers at Eden Village Camp as a music specialist and herbalist. She continues her Jewish learning with queer and leftist Jewish communities.

The harmonies on Halpert's recordings are beautiful and her songs and their messages stay with the listener. I was especially taken with her version of Ana Elna Refana La, a prayer about healing. She performed this during her Zoom Havdallah Concert sponsored by Temple Beth Emeth.

Watch for upcoming performances and check out Halpert's music at alyhalpert.com/music. This music is sure to uplift and inspire you during these difficult times. ■

Community conversation on interfaith collaboration

Rebecca Belkin and Kayla Kapen, special to the WJN

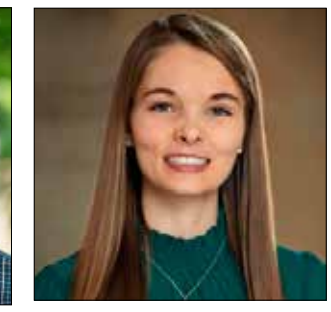
The Jewish Communal Leadership Program at the University of Michigan School of Social Work invites all to join their annual community conversation program, Building Bridges in a Divided World: The Role of Interfaith Collaboration in Justice Work.

The Zoom event, organized by the program's second-year cohort, will take place on Thursday evening, March 18. Panelists who are involved in interfaith work across the country will discuss the important role faith-based organizations have had in using their platforms to vocalize societal issues, responding to community needs during COVID-19, and promoting understanding among diversity through dialogue. There will also be smaller group discussions in breakout rooms, to allow for more engaging and intimate dialogue. JCLP's second-year cohort is thrilled and honored to invite the experiences of interfaith professionals and learn about how this important work can lead to justice and better support for all our communities.

The students hope community members will join them March 18 to engage in this meaningful dialogue and think about the opportunities that forming relationships across difference and engaging in interfaith work provides. Please check the University of Michigan School of Social Work website for the registration link at https://ssw.umich.edu/offices/jewish-communal-leadership-program. If you have any questions regarding the event, please email Paige Walker at vpwalker@umich.edu. ■

Hilary Forrest

Simi Adler



Courtney Bushnell

Kayla Kapen

Meredith Berlin

Rebecca Belkin

Rebecca Belkin and Kayla Kapen are second-year students in the Jewish Communal Leadership Program studying Community Organizing and Management of Human Services, respectively.

I miss my shul

By Dvora Schulman

During these last ten months, this global pandemic has disrupted our lives in both small and enormous ways. Going into another spike, another lockdown, another quarantine, what can I say that we haven't already said? What can I write that you haven't already read?

I miss my shul.

Not that there aren't plenty of Zoom classes. Last May, when my grandson turned three, we had a drive-by upshernish. On Shavuot, we were thrilled to receive a box with everything but the ice cream. On Rosh Hashanah, we had outdoor services and blew the shofar. On Hanukkah, hot latkes individually packaged were delivered to our car, drive-in style, at an extraordinary parking lot event complete with large screen video and music.

I miss my community.

One of the big takeaways for me has been the deep understanding of the special role our Ann Arbor Chabad House has in our lives and our community. With that awareness has come a need and an opportunity to ensure that long after this pandemic, the Ann Arbor Chabad House will continue and grow.

I thought that only wealthy people could make a lasting impact with a meaningful gift to support our pivotal Jewish organizations. I've learned that by being part of Life & Legacy, it is possible for all of us to make certain that the Ann Arbor Chabad House is able to continue to serve every Jew forever. Please join me and be remembered forever with a gift in your will, trust, retirement account, or life insurance policy. Feel free to contact me to learn more about this opportunity to ensure that what you value continues for your children's children and for generations to come. Looking forward to connecting via Zoom please reach out to dgschulman@gmail.com. ■

Attending shiva during the pandemic

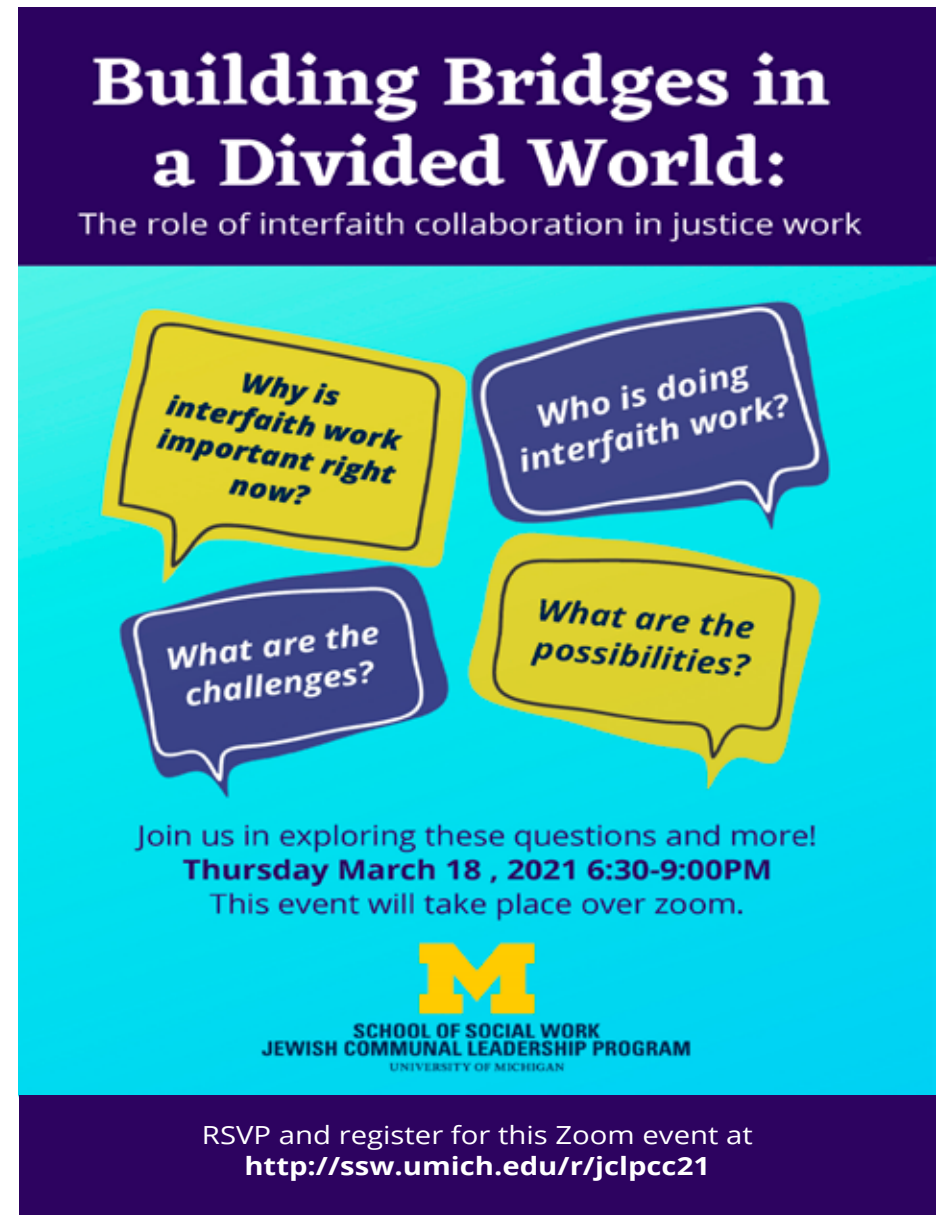
Jack Zaientz, special to the WJN

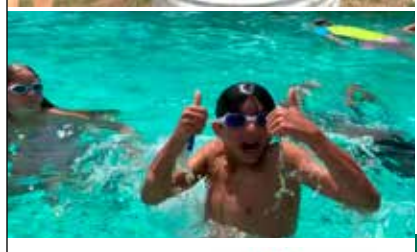
Two years ago, on a chilly fall night, I awkwardly entered the house of a family I didn't know. I was wearing a tie and a heavy coat, but not a mask. No masks yet. It was the first time I had attended a shiva since stepping into the role as Vice President for Religious Practice at Temple Beth Emeth. Shiva is the Jewish week-long mourning period after the death of a close relative. It had long been a tradition at TBE that members of the Board of Trustees attended shiva minyans in the homes of members of our congregation, but it was a tradition that had waned over the years. This was a good year to revive it. And so, I stood outside the home of a member who was mourning, not sure what it meant for me to be there or how I would be received. I did not anticipate how moving and meaningful attending the shiva would be, how much it would mean to the family, and how, almost two dozen shivas later, attending shiva for strangers would become a regular part of my life.

During the shiva service, I was jammed back in a corner next to a tall plant in a room filled with the family and friends of the person who had died. I had made my greetings and given my condolences to the family, who had been warm and gracious, and nodded at the few congregation members that I knew. I listened to Rabbi Whinston chant kaddish and read moving words from the prayerbook. I felt like I was unnecessary, an observer and outsider to the family's private pain. It took me another five or six shivas before I realized I had it completely backwards. Being jammed into a room full of mourners was the entire point. We were there to fill the place. For each family member telling a story about the departed, there was a family member nodding at the shared memory, and a community member hearing it for the first time. We mourned and laughed together in an overflowing room and knew the deceased a bit better.

Shiva during the COVID-19 pandemic has changed some the traditions, but not the most important aspects. Instead of walking into a stranger's house, we log into Zoom. Clothing is more casual, and we eat our own snacks. What we lose in that feeling of an overflowing room we gain back in seeing faces and hearing voices from around the country. At one shiva this fall, the deceased was the parent of a good friend of mine in the congregation, and the funeral and shiva took place on the east coast. His family laughed and bickered while waiting for the shiva to start. They sounded so much like my family in Connecticut that I felt like I'd been temporarily adopted.

Because of the pandemic, attending a shiva is easier now than ever. TBE sends out "Sad News" announcements after the death of a member of the congregation or the death of one of their loved ones. I'm sure all congregations in Ann Arbor do the same. The email provides the date, time, Zoom link (or equivalent), and an invitation to join. That invitation really is for all of us. Not just the close friends and family. It is a great mitzvah to visit the house of mourners. It is our job, even as strangers, to hear the stories, to join in the prayers, and to fill the (virtual) room to bursting. Our tradition calls us to comfort the mourner, whether we know that person or not. As a room fills, whether physical or virtual, seeing the faces of our community gathering helps bring mourners some degree of comfort in a very difficult time. And after that we're not strangers anymore. ■





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The J goes to Israel without leaving

Clara Silver, special to the WJN

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Ann Arbor will be hosting a first of its kind "trip" to Israel, the Israel Experience, this May 2021, an all-ages, completely online, multi-day travel style experience that promises to be as unique as it will be exciting. Participants will need neither luggage nor passports to engage in interactive experiences like home visits, nature walks, city tours, art workshops, and more. The Israel Experience will be available as individual activities or as a tour package, which will include all the individual activities, as well as a bonus opening session so that the tour group can get to know each other and enjoy their "flight" to Israel. There will also be a bonus closing celebration as part of the total package "ticket." Destinations range from traditional, like Jerusalem or Tel Aviv, to more unique such as "behind the ropes" tours that would not normally be allowed during in-person visits.

The volunteer planning group established goals for the trip that include bringing joy to participants, gaining knowledge, engaging with each other and Israel, experiencing something truly unique, as well as raising significant funds to support the Ann Arbor JCC. The content areas they have identified for the various "stops" on the trip touch on both ancient and modern Israel, and include ecology and the natural world, technology and innovation, visual and performing arts, cultivation and food culture, society and culture, ethnic diversity, and historical touch points. In addition, there will be a "stop" at Ann Arbor's partnership community, Moshav Nahalal. Board member and Israel Experience committee chairperson Prue Rosenthal explains that, "we are planning unique experiences where participants don't simply watch something on a screen, but actually get involved with the activity and each other."

The Israel Experience is also designed to support the Ann Arbor JCC as it looks towards the end of the pandemic, and prepares to build for its future. The D. Dan and Betty Kahn Foundation grant originally slated for travel subsidies and enhancing programs offered through the Israel Center at the J will pivot to help raise funds through the Israel Experience. Executive Director David Stone said, "we have spent a lot of time over the last year working hard to maintain the J and the services we provide to the community, but now we are ready to look beyond the pandemic. To do that we need the financial resources to build the future set out in the 2030 Vision. The Israel Experience allows us to take those first steps towards that future."

The 2030 Vision, currently available at jccannarbor.org under "About the J," is the culmination of two years of community conversations, completed shortly before the pandemic, and imagines the Ann Arbor JCC of the near future. From expanded facilities to enhanced programs and services, the 2030 Vision demonstrates the possibilities the community imagined for the next iteration of the organization. Board member, planning committee member, and experience design expert Robin Pollak explains, "this online travel experience to Israel is an example of the enhanced programming that this organization is capable of offering into the future, as well as an opportunity for supporters to contribute to making that future a reality."

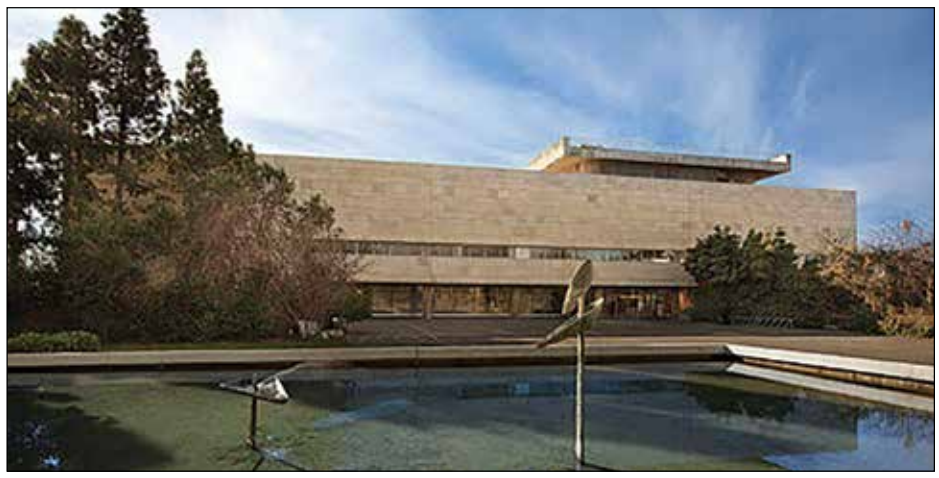
Individual events will be available for $18 each, while the complete tour package will be $180 each. Sponsorship starts at $500 and various levels include additional recognition and benefits. Information about the Israel Experience, sponsor opportunities, and ticket information is available online at jccannarbor.org. Israel Experience tour package and event tickets will go on sale in April. ■

Past and future of the National Library of Israel

By Shifra Epstein

In its 120-plus years of history, August 18, 2020, marked a first for the National Library of Israel as it closed its doors to the public. Budget cuts and the economic upheaval caused by the COVID-19 pandemic forced the library to temporarily stop all public services and to put some 300 employees on unpaid leave.

With some four million physical items stored in the complex, 100,000 of those considered rare — as well as 60 million digitized items — the closure of Israel's national library could be the Jewish state's most prominent cultural loss due to the pandemic.



The "old" NLI building

For many Israelis and especially among those who are privileged users of the library, the closing has resulted in discussions in newspaper and social media about the importance of this national library for "people of the book." Petitions were written and money was donated. Critique was also heard regarding the cost of 100 million dollars for the new library complex, which is scheduled to open in 2022.

The temporary closing of the library — and the discussion around it — inspired me to explore the history the library, which led to the writing of this article.

The history of the National Library of Israel, formerly Jewish National and University Library, goes back to 1892, when the B'nai Brith Organization donated several hundred books towards the foundation of the first Jewish national library in Jerusalem. Over time, thousands of books were donated and stored in different locations in Jerusalem in search for a permanent library.

In 1960, when the Hebrew University moved to its new campus on Givat Ram, in West Jerusalem, a new library was built. Books donated over many years by B'nai Brith organization were rounded up and deposited into the new library.

For almost fifty years the JNUI served as the "unofficial" national library of Israel. Most Israelis, including myself, believed that the JNUI was Israel's official national library.

In 2007 the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, passed the law creating the National Library of Israel. The law, which came into effect on July 23, 2008, transformed the JNUL into the official National Library of Israel.

The new law outlined the mission of the NLI, which is to secure copies of all material published in Israel, in any language; all publications on the subject of Israel, the Land of Israel, Judaism and the Jewish people published in any language, in any country in the world; and all material published in Hebrew or any of the languages spoken by Jews, such as Yiddish or Ladino.

The old NLI building, built in 1960, is located between the Israel Museum to the south and the Knesset to the east. It is part of a "secular acropolis" in Jerusalem that mixes education (university), government (Knesset and government buildings), and culture (the Israel Museum).

Designed by two Israeli architect graduates of the Technion, Ziva Armeni and Hanan Havron, the NLI is considered among the earliest icons of Israeli architecture. It spans approximately 14,000 square meters. Three basement floors form a terrace on the mountain. Above, columns support a wholly transparent first floor. A massive, almost completely opaque block houses the upper two floors of the building. There were no windows. The building represents the extraordinary influence that Le Corbusier's design philosophy had on Israeli architecture.

Israeli art was also part of the library. In the second floor of the library the large iconic stained-glass windows were made by the Israeli artist Mordecai Ardon (1896–1992). Incorporating visual elements from the Kabbalah, the glass windows attract many visitors.

The building's surrounding landscaping as well as the sunken courtyard of the cafeteria on the lower ground floor are also part of this architectural gem.

There are more than five million items physically housed at the NLI: 100,000 items are considered rare. The NLI has the world's largest collections of Hebraica and Judaica, and is the repository of numerous rare and unique manuscripts, books, and artifacts.

The NLI has four core collections: Judaica, Israel and Zionism, Islam and the Middle East, and general Humanities. The Judaica Collection is one of the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in the world, and the rare books department houses manuscripts and early printed books from the 15th–16th centuries, including limited editions.

An example of the library's unique manuscripts is the 13th century Worms Machzor (High Holiday prayer book), one of the oldest prayer books in Yiddish and Hebrew. Another example is the Damascus Bible, dated from 1260, one of the earliest existing complete manuscripts of the Hebrew bible.

The NLI also houses a vast collection of Hebrew and Jewish journals and newspapers.

Noteworthy among the library collection are more than 8,000 books which once belonged to Palestinians who had fled or were expelled in 1948 from their homes in Jerusalem and other cities.

The library launched a website granting public access to books, periodicals, maps, photos, and music from its collections. Since 2011, the NLI has offered 60 million digitized items.

The new library

In 2022 the NLI is planning to move to a new building. With the land donated by the State of Israel, the library will remain in the same general location, a prestigious setting among the Supreme Court and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The construction on the new building is a major milestone in the NLI transformative renewal process, which aims to preserve and open access to the cultural and intellectual treasures of the State of Israel and the Jewish people safeguarded in its collections.

The new building is part of the library shaping itself to the values, challenges, requirements, and technological developments of libraries in the 21st century. It is a project designed to create a cultural institution at the cutting edge of knowledge dissemination and cultural creativity.

The new NLI will house all of the millions of treasures in the old library collections, further positioning it as a center of learning and culture, a repository for collective memory across time and space. The new library is designed by the well-known Basel-based architecture firm Herzog & de Meuron, the designers of a stunning array of international landmarks.

The new library is designed as an environmentally sustainable structure, built over a total of 45,000 square meters (484,375 square feet), with six aboveground floors and four below ground. The roof will be curved so as not to hide the view of the Knesset building, and a large rounded skylight will be located above the main reading room in the center of the building.

The building's covering will feature a mixture of limestone and concrete, creating a modern interpretation of Jerusalem stone. A garden concourse and open-air amphitheater will serve as an ideal central outdoor gathering and leisure point, as well as a site for diverse events.

The new NLI building will combine functions of a central research center, a venue for indoor and outdoor cultural and educational activities, a hall for digital experience, and a secure, climate controlled underground storehouse for its treasures and administrative headquarters. It will enable NLI to provide state-of-the-art services to researchers, readers, visitors, and online users, making accessible the millions of intellectual and cultural assets it has collected for more than 120 years.

The plan is to make the new library fully accessible to the public, with exhibitions, restaurants, a bookstore, and youth space centered around the spacious, three-floor central reading room. The impressive complex will allow researchers and visitors to take advantage of the library's extensive collections of archives, valuable manuscripts, and the many works by famous writers.

One of the major changes will be the reading area. In the old library there were separate reading rooms for Judaica, Israel, Islam, the renovated maps, traveling book, history of science, archive, photography, and Hebrew manuscripts. Books and vitrines containing the library's collection will be left at the center of the library, "forming a foundation and necessary balance against constant technological change."

The old NLI has a special place in my heart

When I was student at the Hebrew University between 1965–1968, the library was the heart of the campus, bustling with activity. I spent a great deal of time in the reading rooms of the library as well as in sitting areas outside.

I remember several conversations outside the reading rooms with the Israeli poet, Yehuda Amichai (1924–2000), who frequented the library quite often. I also had the chance to talk with Professor Gershon Scholem (1897–1982), the scholar of Kabbalah and Mysticism who also frequented the library.

The cafeteria was a popular meeting place for future politicians. It was frequented by Ehud Olmert, the former deposed Israeli Prime Minister, and his friends from the law school. It was also a popular meeting place for members of Matzpen, the revolutionary "wing" of the socialist–turned-communist party.

During the 1967 War I lived in the student housing on Givat Ram only several hundred meters from the library. The library was the only place in the area with a public phone. I would walk to the library to use the phone to call my family. I remember how surprised and happy I was to discover that the library was hardly damaged during the war.

Final words

Though I would prefer the renovating of the old building of the National Library of Israel rather than building a new building, I hope that the new NLI will get the financial support it needs when it opens its doors in 2022 so it will be able to undertake all the projects it sets out to do.

And a final remark concerning the location of the library. Very few Israelis know that the new library, like the old library, are both built on the ruins of what used to be a flourishing Palestinian semi-rural village of Sheikh Badr.

The Palestinian residents of the village were forced to leave after the war of 1948. I hope the new museum will have a plaque at the entrance telling the visitors that the library is built on the former Sheikh Badr. Perhaps in the future, the curators of the NLI will curate an exhibition on the village of Sheikh Badr. ■

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TBE school zooms ahead

Rabbi Daniel Alter, special to the WJN

When the world turned upside down in the midst of COVID-19, so did Temple Beth Emeth's Terri A. Ginsburg Religious & Hebrew School. After deciding last summer to move to a fully online format for the 2020–21 school year, they set about making sweeping changes to better fit the new learning environment. From calendaring to class size to curricula, TBE's education team upended every aspect of the school. From that chaos, TBE's education staff created a brand new program specifically designed to make online learning not only manageable but engaging. In addition to many of the staples of religious school life, TBE introduced several brand new, innovative, and exciting programs this year.

Jacob Spike Kraus

One such creation they call their "Torah Toolbox." In September, preschool and elementary school students received a special package on their doorstep: a large storage bin containing pens, pencils, markers, scissors, glue sticks, construction paper, everything they would need to participate in class this year. "We knew our students would need school supplies," says TBE's Director of Education, Rabbi Daniel K. Alter. "We also recognized the importance of simplicity for our families. We could not expect parents to go out and buy additional everything, so we decided to provide it all ourselves." Each month, students continue to receive additional packages supplementing their Torah Toolboxes with any special supplies for that month's projects. These monthly deliveries would not be possible without the assistance of TBE's volunteer community. Nearly two dozen volunteers deliver about 100 supply bags each month throughout Ann Arbor and its surrounding communities.

Beyond these Torah Toolboxes, TBE jumped at the opportunity to welcome Jacob Spike Kraus as their music teacher this year. Kraus, a professional touring Jewish musician, singer, and songwriter, brings an infectious charisma to the Saturday morning classes. "Spike has been a wonderful addition to our program this year," says Emily Alter, TBE's Shabbat School Coordinator. "Spike's energy, enthusiasm, and joy in singing and teaching Jewish music come right through the screen, and it's easy to see how much our children enjoy singing along with him, even when they're muted." To learn more about Spike or to hear some of this music, visit his website at www.jacobspikekraus.com

TBE also expanded its Hebrew Through Movement (HtM) program. Created by the Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, HtM serves as a foundation for the sound-to-print philosophy of Hebrew education. HtM shares the beauty of Hebrew as a real, spoken language, enabling young learners to get a taste of the sound and feel of the language long before learning to read it. This exposure makes learning to read Hebrew easier and far more fun. To an observer, Hebrew Through Movement looks like a mix of Simon Says and Monkey See, Monkey Do. For example, from a standing position the teacher may slowly sit down while saying lashevet, inviting students to both mimic the action and repeat the word. In doing so, the instructor helps the students connect the action of sitting with the Hebrew infinitive "to sit." Next, the instructor would stand while stating lakum, "to stand," inviting kids to do the same. In this way, HtM connects everyday actions and objects with Hebrew language through physical motion.

"When we learn to read English, we already have a foundation in English, and this gives us an internal metric to recognize when we pronounce a word correctly," Rabbi Alter explains. "Most of our students have no such foundation, no such metric, for Hebrew. It explains why Hebrew students tend to inflect every word, even every syllable, as a question! Hebrew Through Movement equips our students with that metric, with a confidence to read Hebrew that they never had before." One of TBE's longtime teachers, Yarden Ginsburg, took on the role of teaching Hebrew Through Movement this year. "One of the important themes of HtM is for the students to have fun and be engaged while learning," Ginsburg says, "and I definitely think we succeed in accomplishing that. It's a pleasure to see the smiles and enjoyment on the students' faces during each HTM session."

TBE's youth groups have pivoted this year as well. In the fall, they created SYRUP (Supplemental Youth Religious Programming). SYRUP offered small group, outdoor, in-person opportunities for students to interact and have fun. When the weather turned, TBE's Youth Director, Nikki Richardson, created "Whatchya Doin' Wednesdays," a dedicated time for elementary school students to socialize, reflect, and play. "Whatchya Doin' Wednesdays have been a wonderful way to connect with the K–2nd and 3–5th graders in a different way," shares Richardson. "We have the space to talk about our weeks, bring things to show and tell, just hang out and play some games. We are on Zoom without feeling like we are on Zoom. The hour we are together goes by so quickly, and we are all sad when it ends!"

As vaccines for COVID-19 roll out across the country, TBE teachers and staff look forward to when it will be safe to return to the synagogue and the classrooms. Until then, TBE's Terri A. Ginsburg Religious & Hebrew School continues charting new ground on Zoom. ■

Temple Beth Emeth events March

All events and services are virtual. Go to the Temple Beth Emeth website for the Zoom links and more information.

Daily morning blessings
Daily at 9:15 a.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston each morning via Zoom for a short morning blessing.

Daily afternoon blessings
Mondays–Thursdays at 3 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut each afternoon via Zoom for a short afternoon blessing.

Weekly Lunch & Learn
Fridays at noon
Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Sessions are open to the entire community. Feel free to bring your lunch.

Families with Young Children Tot Shabbat
Fridays
Tot Shabbat Services at 5:45 p.m.
Shira Service at 6:15 p.m.
All of your favorite songs led by TBE's tot team, Cantor Hayut, and Rabbi Whinston. Contact cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org for more information.

Shabbat morning Torah study
Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

Saturday Shabbat service
Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Havdalah from the Whinston Home
Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston and his family for a short prayer marking the end of Shabbat.

Melave Malka Series Part III
An Ann Arbor Orthodox Minion Event
Saturday, March 13, 7 p.m.
Co-Sponsored by Temple Beth Emeth and Beth Israel Congregation
Featuring author Menachem Kaiser

Kol HaLev rehearsal and meeting
Sundays at 7 p.m.
For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

Women of TBE Historical Novel Reading Group
Monday, March 8, 12:30 p.m.
The WTBE Reading Group meets on the second Monday of each month, Contact Molly Lindner at burnham@umich.edu.

Weekly Mahj
Weekly on Mondays at 1 p.m.
Weekly on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Offsite, see contact info on TBE website

WTBE Cooks Monday meals
Mondays, March 1 and 15, 3:30 p.m.

Adult B'nai mitzvah classes
Mondays at 6 p.m.
Join Cantor Regina Hayut for an hour for either an afternoon session or an evening session. To join the class, or for more information, contact Cantor Hayut.

Women's Torah study
Mondays, March, 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 at 7 p.m.
An in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion led by Cantor Regina Hayut. The group will explore various passages from the portion, looking at several translations and commentaries.

Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene
Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9:00 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Talmud Tuesdays with Rabbi Alter
Tuesdays at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.
Join Rabbi Alter to learn about the history of Rabbinical literature and some tremendous texts from Talmud!

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emeritus Annie Rose
Tuesday, March 9, at 7:30 p.m., and Thursday, March 11, at noon

Meditation with Claire Weiner
Wednesdays at 5 p.m.
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session.

Back Door Food Pantry
Thursdays, 4–7 p.m.

WTBE Virtual Happy Hour
March 11 and 25, 5:30 p.m.
Join WTBE's virtual Happy Hour to catch up and schmooze.

Biblical Book Club with Cantor Hayut
Thursdays at 11 a.m.
Sundays at 3 p.m.
For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

WTBE Community Wellness Events
Thursday, March 11 at 7:30 p.m.
End of Life Doulas: Consulting, Education, and Caring Support

TBE Brotherhood
Thursday, March 18, 7 p.m.
Guys Night In ■

Phone numbers, websites and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, 248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org
Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734.445.1910, aarecon.org
Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, bethisrael-aa.org
Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com
Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/
Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org
Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org
Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org
Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org
Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org
Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org
UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org ■

Beth Israel Congregation in March

Jewish Ethics and Policing in the United States and Israel presented by Rabbi Fred Schwalb and Prof. Benjamin Ish-Shalom

Sunday, March 7
1 p.m.
The relationship between police and civilians is not just a problem in the United States. As a recent article in the New York Times demonstrated, it is also very much a problem in Israel. Rabbi Fred Schwalb and Professor Benjamin Ish-Shalom of Beit Morasha Jerusalem will dialogue about the problem in Israel, how it is complicated by the added issues related to security, what is currently being done to solve the problem, and what remains to be done. Following the dialogue there will be a question and answer period.

HIAS Refugee Shabbat
Friday & Saturday, March 5 and 6
6 p.m. and 9:30 a.m.
HIAS Refugee Shabbat. HIAS' Senior Director of Community Engagement, Isabel Burton, will speak during Friday evening services. She will provide an update on the current status of international refugee issues, as well as policy and new arrivals issues. Jewish Family Services Ann Arbor will provide information on the refugee-led businesses that they incubate. Saturday morning will feature a dvar Torah on the refugee resettlement imperative for the local Jewish community.

Tea & Torah Study with Rabbi Caine
Thursday, March 4
6:30 p.m.
Brew a cup of tea and join Rabbi Caine for Torah study. We'll delve into the depths of Torah, starting with Genesis (not the weekly parashah), as we bring our best selves and traditional perspectives to engage the text and apply it to our daily lives. A variety of teas will be sent on a monthly basis.

Tot Shabbat with the Caine Family
Friday, March 12
5:30 p.m.
Join Rav Nadav, Lynne, Merav and Ziva for Kabbalat Tot Shabbat by Zoom! Bring in Shabbat with music, dancing, candle lighting, and kiddush. Invite your friends! If you are new to the program and have not received your special Tot Shabbat bag, contact Sam at szielinksi@bethisrael-aa.org.

Family Game Night
Sunday, March 14
5 p.m.
Get supplies delivered, learn new games, and have some fun! We'll start with icebreakers, test our knowledge with trivia, then learn a new game to play with your family. For families with children in grades K–5. Register on the BIC website (www.bethisrael-aa.org).

Shabbat Biweekly Lunch 'N' Learn: Contemporary Issues in Jewish Law with Rabbi Caine
Saturday, March 20
11:45 a.m.
From the kashrut of eating in restaurants to electric cars to Zoom on Shabbat, Rabbi Caine brings traditional Jewish legal codes and responsa to have us consider "Jewish Law" thoughtfully and to elucidate the issues of living Jewishly in our modern lives. Biweekly through May 15 following Saturday services. Register on the BIC website.
Teen Led Shabbat
Saturday, March 20
9:30 a.m.
Beth Israel teens will lead various parts of the regular Saturday morning service.

Mystery Reader
Sunday, March 21
11 a.m.
Join us for stories read by a special Mystery reader! Who will it be this month? For children ages 5 and under.

Passover Lego Contest
Sunday, March 21
3 p.m.
Use your architectural skills to make your own Passover creation! Re-create the seder plate, show us a Lego seder, or reimagine part of the story of Passover. It's up to you! Register with Amanda Glucklich, engage@bethisrael-aa.org.

Make Your Own Matzoh
Sunday, March 21
4 p.m.
Open to ALL AGES with Engagement and Programs Director Amanda Glucklich. For more information and to join, please contact Amanda at engage@bethisrael-aa.org.

Siyyyum with Rabbi Dobrusin
Thursday, March 25

Rav Nadav's Folk YouTube Seder
Sunday, March 28
6 p.m.
From the serious to the sublime, from the heartbreaking to the comforting, from the surprising to the uncanny, the Seder's words and themes will be melded into classic spirituals from Bob Marley, Leonard Cohen, Greg Brown, Matisyahu, and U2. Prepare to laugh, sing, and be surprised! Will be broadcast via YouTube.

Chopped: Passover Edition
Wednesday, March 31
Multiple times based on age
Sign up to compete against others in your age group to make a delicious, creative dish with a Passover-inspired secret ingredient! Visit the Beth Israel website for more details.

Afikomen Scavenger Hunt/ Geocache Activity
March 28th–April 4th
You can choose the Scavenger Hunt OR Geocache activities to find the hidden afikomen. This do-it-yourself activity will be available during the week of Passover from March 28–April 4 on the BIC website. We are thrilled to spearhead this community-wide program that will also include participants from the Ann Arbor JCC, Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation, Federation, Hebrew Day School, Hillel, and Temple Beth Emeth.

Theology Book Club — Online
Wednesdays
8 p.m.
Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin
Mondays
3:30 p.m.
Rabbi Dobrusin will be facilitating a Talmud class online on Monday afternoons from 3:30–4:30. While we will read the Hebrew/Aramaic text, translations are available and all discussions will be in English. All are welcome to join regardless of the level of your familiarity with Hebrew.

Pirke Avot: Teachings of the Sages
Thursdays
5 p.m.
Rabbi Dobrusin will facilitate Zoom discussions on the classic Rabbinic text: Pirke Avot. While the title is usually translated as "Teachings of the Sages," a more interesting translation is "Chapters of Fundamental Principles." Pirke Avot consists of short rabbinic statements concerning ethics, faith, and interpersonal relationships. Reading Pirke Avot helps us focus on the values and principles which guide our lives. We will study the text in English referring occasionally to the Hebrew. The text can be found in the Shabbat morning Sim Shalom siddur. Check the online calendar for specific dates.

Online Services

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes, and events, all virtually. Below is a list of the links to participate in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now livestreaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links will also be available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.
Evening Minyan
Sunday
5 p.m.

Monday–Thursday
7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services
Kabbalat Shabbat Service
6 p.m.

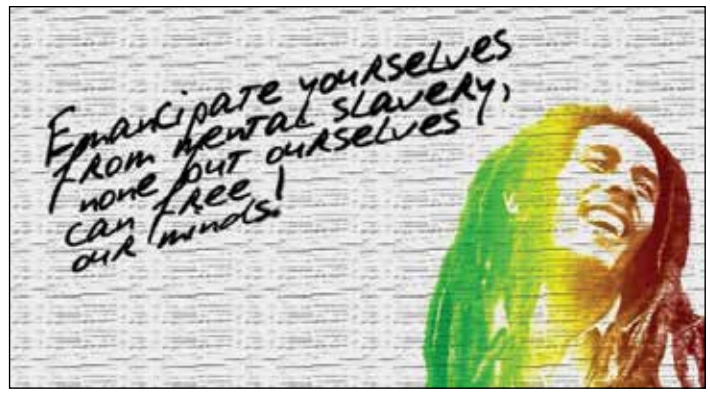
Shabbat Morning Services
Saturday
9:30 a.m. ■

You're invited: Musical folk seder

By Rabbi Nadav Caine

Passover is a holiday that beautifully combines the utterly serious and the wonderfully joyous. From re-experiencing the bitterness of oppression in all its facets, we express gratitude with full hearts, we stress the urgency of liberating others, all while we sing joyously.

I have found the same elements woven together in much of the music I love, especially folk, blues, and reggae. When I hear Bob Marley sing his "Them Belly Full But We Hungry," I hear him swaying and rocking to the urgency of how the taskmasters of the ruling class keep the oppressed hungry in economic exploitation and disparity, as if it's all perfectly normal. I think of the Israelites given insufficient straw to make their brick quota and the urgency of liberation. When he continues the song with the need for his people to hold a festival and dance, I am reminded of Moses' request to Pharaoh that all the Israelites want is to go into the wilderness for three days to hold a festival in which you dance (which is the original meaning of the word chag). Of course these similarities are no accident, as the Exodus narrative was an inspiration for his lyrics.



Perhaps no song articulates the essence of the seder so well as well as Bob Marley's "Redemption Song," which combines the three elements of making the past present, with all its ethical urgency, by singing and passing on our redemption songs.

This year, I'm so happy to share with the entire Ann Arbor community and beyond a Second Seder I've constructed from some of my favorite songs, including these. Sometimes I leave the songs just as they are — Matisyahu's "Jerusalem" (as "Next Year in Jerusalem") or Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" (as Hallel) — and sometimes I modify a word here and there with the words and themes of the haggadah. I'll leave it to your eye to notice my minor changes to these words of Bob Marley's "Redemption Song":

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery
We Jews must free our minds
Have no fear of being Jewish
Don't say you have no time
How long shall we ignore our prophets
While they stand aside and look?
We'll build a new Jerusalem
We've got to fulfill the Book
Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all we ever have...
Redemption songs!

Everyone is invited to the Beth Israel Congregation of Ann Arbor YouTube Channel at 6 p.m. on Sunday March 28 to join me, my family, our cantorial soloist Dr. Neil Alexander, and a live band for the Rav Nadav Musical Folk Second Seder. Please join us virtually and celebrate! ■

Passover 5781: a perspective from JFS

by Devon Meier

Most of us know the Passover story as one of freedom and hope — the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Like every well-told tale, this one invites all who read it to see themselves in the narrative, laboring toward liberation.

For many in Washtenaw County — and beyond — the hope and promise contained in the idea of "liberation" are more poignant than ever this year, as the month of March also marks the one-year anniversary of the broadly implemented, nationwide pivot in our daily practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the traditional Four Questions, many are quietly asking one more in 2021: Will this be the year for liberation from the illness and death associated with COVID-19, as well as from pandemic quarantines and other crucial life-saving constraints on our daily activities?

At Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County, liberation from a wide array of constraints remains an ongoing theme and continued effort on behalf of the most vulnerable in our community. These efforts are part of the nonprofit's overall mission to create solutions, promote dignity, and inspire humanity. The work of JFS spans a range of offerings that impact people's individual freedom, mobility, and sense of liberation: delivering groceries and meals; introducing technology to older adults to reduce isolation; resettling refugees from around the world; walking alongside those searching for employment; providing respite to caregivers; offering transportation; and supporting Holocaust survivors.

This work is possible only with the faithful support of loyal donors, volunteers, partners, and friends. With their help, during the pandemic, JFS has been able to provide roughly 390,000 pounds of food to community members, resettle 50 refugees, reduce the isolation of older adults with upward of 25,000 minutes of Washtenaw Integrated Senior Experience (WISE) Comfort Line calls, and much more.

Last year, at Passover 5780, JFS could not have predicted the enduring impacts of the pandemic. Likewise, the year ahead will be difficult to forecast. While JFS hopes for a brighter, healthier year ahead, the agency also understands that the depths of isolation and stress experienced by many in our community will not change overnight.

Many of the Holocaust survivors served by JFS have been particularly affected by the COVID-19 crisis. This service is supported by a grant from the JFNA Center for Advancing Holocaust Survivor Care. Before the pandemic, survivors in this program relied on twice-weekly gatherings for social time and enrichment. Now they grieve the loss of the in-person human connection that this program was able to provide. However, they continue to receive wraparound care coordination and services, and they report their ongoing Skype meetings as a highlight of their days.

JFS does anticipate that healing — as individuals and as a collective — will take time. Clients receiving JFS Thrive Counseling services via telehealth have generally transitioned well to the virtual setting. Many even prefer the ease of online or telephone access and wish to continue using these tools even after in-person meetings become safe again. Others acknowledge that virtual connection — while not their preferred mode — can be a meaningful substitute for in-person interaction, when necessary.

Towards the end of 2021, JFS anticipates a significant increase in refugees arriving in the United States for resettlement. As the premier resettlement agency in Washtenaw County, JFS will continue to assist families and individuals, including through specialized youth services for refugees and immigrants. JFS also teaches English as a second language and provides interpretation services in more than 25 languages.

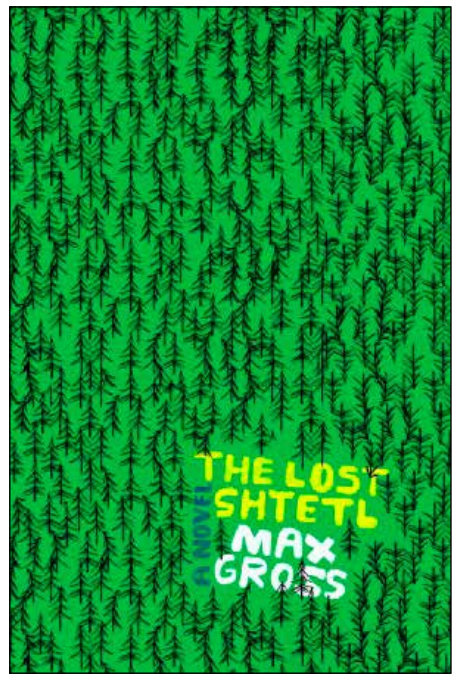
JFS's work toward liberation and freedom for the most vulnerable residents of Washtenaw County is not over. As COVID-19 persists in penetrating and disrupting our world, the community can help by supporting JFS as it continues to:

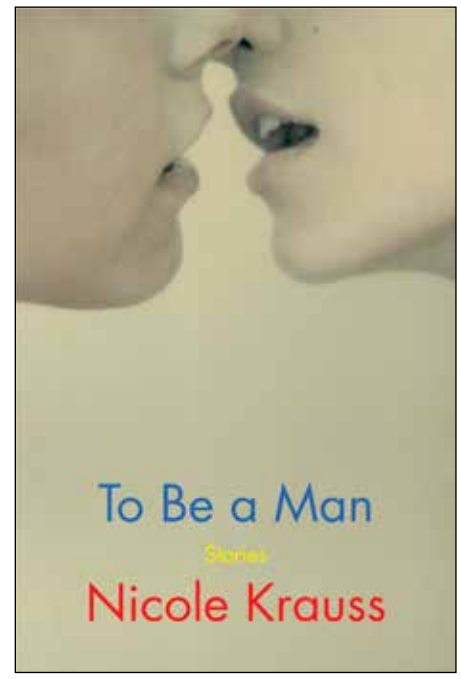
DELIVER prepared meals and groceries to Holocaust survivors, isolated seniors, disabled adults, and newly arrived refugees
CONNECT with isolated seniors through the WISE Comfort Line, counseling, and technology
PROVIDE care coordination to older adults facing extraordinary challenges during this time
LINK unemployed and underemployed adults with employers and financial resources
OFFER crisis management support, including eviction and utility shutoff prevention
SUPPORT caregivers through Caregiver Assessment Respite Education & Support (CARES)
LISTEN and counsel through THRIVE teletherapy and virtual support groups
LAUNCH virtual support programs for a variety of community members including older adults, refugees, and immigrant youth
TRANSPORT older adults, people with disabilities, and others in need to critical medical visits and treatments
SUPPORT refugees as they navigate integration during the pandemic and beyond
INNOVATE revenue-producing programs through the Herb Amster Center

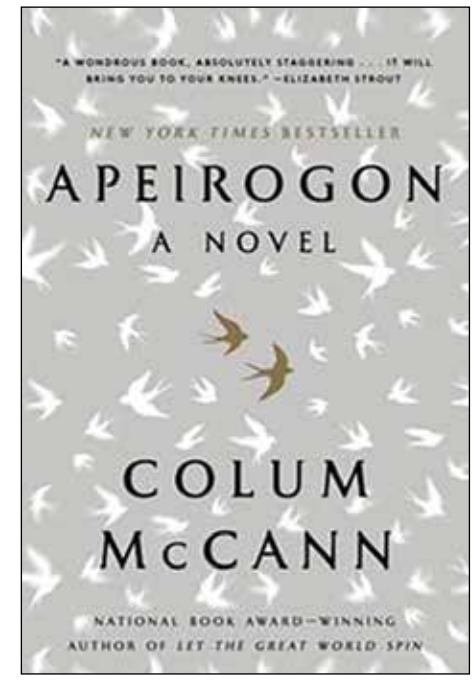
For today, JFS extends best wishes for a good Pesach to all who celebrate, with special thanks to those who support the agency in helping the most vulnerable in the community overcome the barriers they face to freedom. For more information about JFS services and how you can get involved, please visit www.jfsannarbor.org or call (734) 769-0209. ■

AJL announces the Jewish fiction award winners

Max Gross is the winner of the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) Jewish Fiction Award for his novel *The Lost Shtetl*, published by HarperVia, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers. The award includes a $1,000 cash prize and support to attend the 57th Annual Conference of the Association of Jewish Libraries, June 27–July 1, 2021. Two other books were also recognized: *To Be a Man: Stories* by Nicole Krauss, published by Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, and *Apeirogon: A Novel* by Colum McCann, published by Penguin Random House. The Committee reviewed over 70 works of fiction originally written in English with significant Jewish thematic content published in the United States in 2020. Thanks to all those who submitted entries for consideration. The wide array of books published in 2020 is a testament to the vibrant state of contemporary Jewish fiction.







In many ways Kreskol, the nominal Lost Shtetl, is a typical 19th century Polish village. It has the expected mix of competing synagogues and schools; happy and miserable families; and comfortable and poor inhabitants. What is surprising about Kreskol is that in Brigadoon style, it survived deep in the forests with no connection to the outside world. Set during the end of the 20th century, *The Lost Shtetl* tells the story of a town neglected by time, unaware of the Holocaust or the creation of the state of Israel. When the Polish government "finds" Kreskol, there is massive culture shock on both sides. The Jewish villagers must decide how much to embrace the modern world and the Polish government has to decide how much they want to invest in this small contentious village. "An impressive debut novel, *The Lost Shtetl* is a thoroughly enjoyable story, with lots of humor, but also incredibly sophisticated, clever, poignant and thought provoking," noted Laura Schutzman, Chair of the Award Committee.

The ten stories in *To Be a Man* by Nicole Krauss deal with the struggle to understand what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman, and all of the tensions in the relationships between parents and children, lovers and friends, husbands and wives. All contemporary, they span the globe from Switzerland, Japan, and New York City to Tel Aviv, Los Angeles, and South America. "Each is impactful and memorable with fully developed characters, often wrestling with their Jewish identity, who stay with you long after the reading experience is over," commented Rachel Kamin, member of the Award Committee.

Apeirogon, in telling the story of two fathers, an Israeli and a Palestinian united in grief after losing their daughters to the conflict, weaves together fiction and nonfiction, crossing centuries and continents, to create a multifaceted and multilayered exploration of history, art, politics, love, loss, hope, and the power of storytelling. An apeirogon is a shape with an infinitely countable number of sides; *Apeirogon*, the novel, "evokes a mosaic with an infinitely countable number of pieces that have been assembled into a beautifully written, emotionally charged, and exceedingly relevant work of fiction," remarked Paula Breger, member of the Award Committee. The intricacies and conflicting themes of *Apeirogon* are sure to elicit much debate and discussion.

The AJL Jewish Fiction Award Committee members are Paula Breger, Beth Dwoskin, Rachel Kamin, Laura Schutzman, and Sheryl Stahl.

The Association of Jewish Libraries gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Dan Wyman Books for underwriting the Award. Submissions for the 2022 AJL Fiction Award (titles published in 2021) are now being accepted. For more information, please visit www.jewishlibraries.org.

The Association of Jewish Libraries is an all-volunteer professional organization that promotes Jewish literacy through enhancement of libraries and library resources and through leadership for the profession and practitioners of Judaica librarianship. The Association fosters access to information, learning, teaching and research relating to Jews, Judaism, the Jewish experience and Israel. ■

"Mind Aerobics" classes coming soon to JFS

Jacob Singer, special to the WJN

Just as the human body requires frequent physical activity to maintain optimal health, the human brain also needs regular cognitive "exercise" to address normal cognitive changes that come with aging. Recognizing this, Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County is excited to offer a new program, Mind Aerobics — an online workout class for the brain. Developed by the New England Cognitive Center (NECC), the program uses games and activities to target reaction time, visual and spatial abilities, attention and concentration, memory, language, and problem-solving.

The nonprofit NECC — which is headquartered in New London, Connecticut — is dedicated to developing and distributing research-based cognitive fitness programs. NECC combines the latest advances in neuropsychological research with sound educational principles to create effective interventions that enhance brain health, independence, and quality of life.

Mind Aerobics classes are organized by cognitive level, with participants grouped into classes based on their cognitive functioning. Each Mind Aerobics series includes 24 small-group sessions presented by a facilitator trained in NECC Mind Aerobics. Virtual classes meet for an hour, twice a week, for 12 weeks. The series follows a carefully developed curriculum: sessions target major cognitive areas, progressing from basic brain functions to more complex executive skills. Activities build sequentially, gradually increasing the level of challenge.

JFS will launch its Mind Aerobics classes by offering the Mind Sharpener curriculum. This program is perfect for people with mild to no cognitive decline and no impairment. "Some degree of cognitive decline is normal — and frankly, expected — with aging," JFS Chief Program Officer Sarah Hong said. "The Mind Sharpener class is ideal for those who want to be proactive about cognitive fitness. It's like going to a brain workout twice each week." Ideal participants for the Mind Sharpener curriculum may occasionally complain of memory deficits or difficulties with word-finding but generally demonstrate healthy cognitive function by all objective measures.

Mind Sharpener activities were designed, and will be presented, using approaches that appeal best to adult learners. Sessions incorporate repetition and reinforcement practices to enhance learning and retention. The comfortable, cooperative learning environment promotes interactive socialization. Of course, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, JFS will lead the spring Mind Sharpener classes virtually online.

JFS will offer the first Mind Sharpener session this month, March 2021. Please visit www.jfsannarbor.org for registration details. Space is limited and extra classes may be offered as needed. The fee for the 12-week class is $240 (including 24 one-hour sessions). Scholarships are available; no one will be turned away due to inability to pay. For more information, please contact JFS Manager of Community Engagement and Volunteer Services Jacob Singer at jsinger@jfsannarbor.org. ■

Four cups of wine vs. three matzohs

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

On the nights of the Passover seder (Saturday and Sunday night March 27–28) we eat matzoh because the Torah tells us to eat matzoh on the night of Pesach (Passover). The Rabbis instituted that it should be three matzohs. In addition to the matzos on the night of the seder, we drink wine. According to the rabbis, we should drink four cups of wine. Why four cups of wine? Because that corresponds to the four expressions of redemption. The Torah says four times that God will take us out of Egypt and corresponding to those four expressions we have four cups of wine. A question is, why, when it comes to eating the matzoh, we take three portions but with wine we take four portions? There are reasons for these differences.

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein

From a halachic viewpoint, we use three matzohs because on Shabbat and holidays we use only two matzohs or challot and the third one symbolizes the bread of affliction.

There is also an inner dimension to the reason why we take three matzohs but four cups of wine. It is known that at the time when the Jewish people left Egypt we weren't really worthy to be redeemed. To the extent, it is said, that if we had remained in Egypt for one more moment we would have been consumed in the uncleanliness of Egypt and there would have been nobody left to take out of Egypt. Therefore, God had to take us as quickly as the blink of an eye and had to use special powers to take us out. As we say in the haggadah, it was a revelation of the King of all Kings — God taking the Jews out of Egypt. When we left Egypt we were at a very low level. When did we elevate ourselves to be totally redeemed from Egypt? This came when we were at Mt. Sinai to receive the Torah. Only then, when we had managed to purify ourselves from the uncleanliness of Egypt, and were now ready to receive the Torah, were we worthy to receive the title of a "Holy Nation." This is expressed in the fourth expression of redemption. The first three speak only about leaving Egypt, and the fourth expression is that God will take us to Him and we should be His people or nation.

This is the reason why, when it comes to the matzoh, we have three matzoh portions and four wine portions. The matzoh symbolizes how we were just simply leaving Egypt. We weren't yet worthy and pure enough to be the Jewish People. This is why the matzoh is used as the symbol for this stage. Matzoh is called the bread of affliction. It has no taste. It represents spiritual poverty and service to God on the lowest level. This is where we were at the time we left Egypt. We had no understanding, no feeling, no appreciation of God's commandments — without any appreciation for any taste — like matzoh that has no taste. On the contrary, when we consider the wine we drink on the seder night — it has a good taste, it symbolizes how we understand and have a recognition and an appreciation for God. It represents the highest level of our service to God. This is where a person comes to the level of understanding and feeling of appreciation for God. To the extent, it says that, one sings a song when they drink wine because it shows our exuberance in serving God. It also shows a complete redemption from the evil, unclean part of Egypt and becoming holy.

Therefore, matzoh is connected to the number three. It symbolizes the first three expressions of redemption — representing leaving Egypt. God has taken the Jewish people out of Egypt despite the low level of holiness that we exhibited. God did this for us as we didn't fully deserve redemption. This is the symbolism of three rather than four matzohs. We were not yet at the fourth level when God makes us into His nation. Then, finally, we leave Egypt and stand in front of Mt. Sinai. This is represented by drinking the wine — the fourth expression of redemption when God takes us as His Nation. This is where we are fit to be together with God and we have reached a level of recognizing, understanding, and feeling God — that is with the wine. Wine has a good taste. Therefore, when it comes to wine we drink four cups (portions) as opposed to the three matzoh (portions).

May we all have a joyous and meaningful Passover. If you need matzoh or any other holiday supplies, please contact Chabad of Ann Arbor (734) 995-3276. ■

Expand redemption: Don't forget the Rohingya

Rabbi Josh Whinston, special to the WJN

We are in the midst of our freedom. In recent weeks, God has taken us out of Egypt, split the sea, and led us to Sinai in a pillar of fire by day and smoke by night. We stand at the foot of Sinai having heard God speak directly to us and receiving the Ten Commandments. We will remain at Sinai for two years, waiting until God tells us it is time to march on to Canaan, the Promised Land.

Our religious tradition is vast and offers us so many ways of adding meaning to our lives. At the center of Judaism — the very soul of our religion — is our redemption from Egypt, covenant at Sinai, and God giving us the Promised Land. As a Jew, these deep facets of our communal memory and experience speak loudly to me, they fill me with hope and resilience and confidence in our future. As a Reform Jew, I also hear the call to expand the particularistic ideas found in our tradition in more universal terms. For all peoples, whenever and wherever they find themselves in Egypt, we must work toward their redemption, we must help them find their Sinai, we must ensure they have a place to call home.

The theological reasons noted above are reason enough to involve ourselves when others feel the yoke of persecution. Of course, our history of persecution and genocide offers even more credence to our involvement. Even as our country moves through trials and tribulations, we must not forfeit our willingness to look beyond our shores to ongoing genocide. The Rohingya people have lived in Burma (Myanmar) for centuries, yet in 1982 the Burmese government began to strip the Rohingya of their citizenship. As an ethnic minority, they lived a vulnerable existence made even more difficult as genocidal violence began in 2017. The Burmese military attacked these people. Soldiers burned entire Rohingya villages to the ground; indiscriminately massacred Rohingya men, women and children; and forced an estimated 740,000 people to flee on foot or by boat to refugee camps in Bangladesh. This situation was difficult enough, but with the recent coup in Burma, the situation is worsening. Repatriation of the Rohingya is looking less likely, and the Rohingya status in Bangladesh is precarious at best.

With the coup relatively fresh, it is unclear what may happen in Burma, things may have even changed since penning this article. What remains abundantly clear is the need for the world community to speak up. As Jews who have suffered the fate of genocide and who have felt the process of redemption play out in our history, we cannot look away. Burma may be on the other side of the world, filled with people we do not know, yet our history and religious tradition doesn't afford us the luxury of passivity.

The Biden administration has taken some action. For instance, early in February Biden sanctioned the Burmese military government making it much harder for them to access nearly $1 billion dollars in assets in the United States, among other measures. This is a great first step, but it should only be the beginning. Our government needs to use its position of influence, in particular on the UN Security Council to bring about greater international cooperation in the pursuit of justice and accountability in Burma, in particular for past crimes the Burmese military perpetrated against the Rohingya and other ethnic minorities in Burma over decades. The US government must act swiftly and strongly, not only to condemn this egregious assault on democracy, but also to ensure that the same military responsible for the coup is held responsible for the genocide they have committed against the Rohingya people starting in August 2017. We know all too well, from our own Jewish history, what happens when the international community does not stand up unequivocally in defense of oppressed minorities subject to state-sanctioned hate, oppression and violence.

Of course, we could wait and see what our government does to act on this over time, or we can encourage our senators to take action — now. Join me in asking Senators Peters and Stabenow to cosponsor Senate Resolution 35, a bipartisan resolution which condemns this coup and the military detention of civilian leaders.

In a few week's we will be sitting around our seder tables, like last year, we will probably be thinking about our newfound connections to plagues. Yet, we know Passover has been more than an existential message since it began thousands of years ago. Our reality may be shaken in these times of pandemic, but the need for true redemption, true safety, and true security has never lost its real-life necessity. Let's not forget the Rohingya this year as we sit at our seder tables. Let's make sure that we've done what we can to condemn the coup in Burma and work for the safety and security of the Rohingya people in Burma. ■

Follow up questions

Rabbi Jared Anstandig, special to the WJN

While the haggadah enshrines only four questions to be asked on seder night, there are really a number of peculiar foods and activities that can elicit questions. For example, we drink four cups of wine or grape juice at the seder, yet no explanation is given in the haggadah as for why.

The idea of four cups is rather old, being discussed as early as the Mishnah, no later than 200 CE (Pesachim 10:1): "[At the seder] one should have no fewer than four cups of wine." The Babylonian Talmud elaborates on this, offering a reason for drinking wine at the seder (Pesachim 109b), "Ravina said: The Sages instituted four cups, in the manner of freedom." In other words, the wine we drink is supposed to recall for us that we are no longer slaves in Egypt. But, if that's the case, why four? Why not three or five? What's so special about four?

While the Babylonian Talmud is silent on this matter, the Jerusalem Talmud offers a suggestion for the number of cups we drink (Y. Pesachim 10:1), "Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi who said in the name of Rabbi Banniah, '[the four cups] correspond to the four redemptions mentioned in the Torah.'" Here, the Talmud references God's command to Moses in Exodus 6:6-7, "Say, to the Israelites: I am the Lord. I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God. And you shall know that I, the Lord, am your God who freed you from the labors of the Egyptians." According to the Jerusalem Talmud, these four expressions, "I will free you," "I will deliver you," I will redeem you," and "I will take you" each correspond to one of the cups we drink.

Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (19th century, Poland) in his Torah commentary asks a follow up question (Haamek Davar Exodus 6:6), "Why is it specifically wine? Why not four matzas, four types of meat, or something like that?" He suggests that unlike other foods, wine has the ability to change a person's behavior, mood, and general appearance. Additionally, the change is gradual and cumulative. Every glass of wine is impactful, but its impact is only revealed slowly over time, with every subsequent glass becoming more and more potent. So too, Rabbi Berlin explains, is redemption. It may appear slow and disjointed. But, make no mistake, its impact is there, with every stage building on the previous stages. This is true whether speaking about a national redemption, like the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, or our own personal growth and redemption. Getting better is slow and jerky. Yet, like four glasses of wine, if we keep moving forward, the results will eventually be unmistakable. ■

Rabbi Jared Anstandig

Spring, Pesach, and vaccines

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

Oh shoot, it's March! Did you remember that Pesach begins at the end of this month? Somehow, I forgot about Purim until mid-February and then forgot that March follows February, a short month and suddenly, here we are.

My usual routine is to start thinking about Pesach before Purim and even start some of the cleaning of closets. I don't do anything in the kitchen until after Purim but at least I start thinking about things. Like so many other families, last year's seder was on Zoom and it will probably be that way this year as well. The sadness of not all being together is offset by not needing to cook for the masses. Still, I will clean, "kasher" the kitchen, and make some food to drop off for family.

I hope we get together on Zoom again and experience some of the traditions and feel the love. Certainly, many of us will receive the two vaccine shots by the end of March but not everyone. Still, this is the month of spring and that means renewal of growth, time to start the tomato plants, and hope that we will celebrate with our loved ones very soon.

There are still weeks to go before the holiday but it's time to think creatively about using up pantry items that are not kosher for Pesach. We don't eat rice on the holiday like those who follow the Sephardi and Mizrachi traditions. That's unfortunate because we have a generous supply in this kitchen. So, let's think about meals to use up those items that won't be used on Pesach as well as new dishes for the holiday.

Rice and Red Lentils also called Kichree

The Book of Jewish Food, by Claudia Roden

Dairy, serves 4

I have a large bag of red lentils that was intended for a bowl of red lentil soup, but there is enough left over for this dairy meal, which was often a Thursday night light supper served in Jewish Baghdadi families. The idea was to "rest the stomach" in advance of rich food on the Shabbat. This recipe is good topped with a sliced onion fried in oil. When the onion is golden add 12 ounces of haloumi cheese or fresh mozzarella and allow the cheese to soften. Other ideas are to top with plain yogurt or fried eggs or sliced tomatoes.

- 4 garlic cloves, minced or crushed
- 3 tbs vegetable oil
- 2 tsp cumin
- 2 tbs tomato paste
- 1 cup basmati or long grain rice
- 1 cup red lentils
- 4 cups boiling water
- 1 tsp salt, or to taste
- Pepper to taste
- 2 to 6 tbs of butter, to taste

Use a soup pot. Add the oil and the garlic and sauté for a few minutes. Then add the cumin and tomato paste and mix. Then add the rice and lentils and stir to cover them with the mixture. Now add 4 cups of boiling water, salt and pepper, cover the pot and bring the mixture back to a boil. Simmer on very low temperature for about 45 minutes or until the rice is very soft. Add more water, if necessary, to avoid burning the rice. Turn off the heat and stir in the butter and leave the cover on to melt.

Root Vegetables Hash with Herbed Polenta

I would love to give credit to the woman who gave me this recipe, but I don't know her name. She used to run the Jefferson Market a few owners ago. It's delicious and will use up the polenta in the pantry. It's basically roasted vegetables on top of a nice base of polenta. This recipe would feed a few people several times or a larger family once.

- 2 cups each of peeled and sliced root vegetables. You could use carrots, parsnips, potatoes, and/or winter squash
- 1 cup diced onion
- Olive oil
- 1 cup polenta
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- ½ cup minced fresh rosemary and sage
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Honey or maple syrup

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees if roasting and place the vegetables on different pans, as some will need more time to soften. To make the polenta, first bring the stock to a boil and then slowly pour in the polenta in a thin stream. Be sure to do this slowly because if you don't the cornmeal will clump. Reduce the heat to simmer and stir occasionally until the liquid is absorbed. This may take about 20 minutes. Add the fresh herbs at the end. Toss the vegetables with a little honey or maple syrup just to lightly glaze them and serve them over the polenta.

Semolina Yogurt Cake

From InquiringChef.com

I have semolina flour left over from a project back in the fall. I suppose you could use it up to make pizza dough, but I'm not going to do that. There are lots of recipes on the internet for Greek, Middle Eastern, or Italian cakes using semolina flour. They all use a simple syrup to help flavor the cake after it is baked. I really like this recipe because we also have a large container of yogurt in the refrigerator.

Syrup

- ¾ cup water
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1½ tbs lemon or lime or orange juice

Cake

- 3 large eggs
- ½ cup sugar or use honey or another sweetener
- 1½ cups plain yogurt
- ½ cup canola oil or another mild flavored oil
- 1 cup semolina flour
- 2 tbs all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and lightly grease an 8 by 8 baking dish. To make the syrup, combine ¾ cup water and ¾ cup sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat and boil for 1 minute to fully dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice if you are using it. Set aside to cool.

Use a large mixing bowl and whisk together eggs and ½ cup sugar until the sugar dissolves. Add the yogurt and vegetable oil and whisk again to combine. Then add the semolina, all-purpose flour, vanilla extract, baking powder, baking soda, and salt, and stir just until everything is combined. Pour the batter into the greased pan. Bake until the center of the cake is set and the edges are golden, about 30–35 minutes. Remove the cake from the oven and slowly pour the syrup evenly over the entire surface. Let the cake cool completely before slicing. It can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

Chocolate Sweet Potato Torte

Vegetarian and serves 12 or a smaller number of people for several days.

I got this recipe from Debbie in California who had a kosher dairy catering business for 30 years. Debbie's sister, Janet, is another fantastic baker and I've known both women for forever. Since I bought a lot of almond flour and now don't remember why, here is a great idea to use it up. It will be for the Shabbat before Pesach, but I think it could be for Pesach by using coconut milk.

- 1 cup packed, cooked mashed orange sweet potato (1–2 cooked sweet potatoes depending on the size)
- 1½ cups sugar, divided
- 1 cup almond flour
- ½ cup unsweetened dark chocolate cocoa powder
- $^{1}/_{8}$ tsp salt
- 4 large eggs
- 2 oz bittersweet chocolate
- 2 tbs nonfat soymilk

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Coat a 9-inch springform pan with cooking spray. Blend the sweet potato, 1 cup of sugar, almond flour, cocoa, and salt in a food processor for about 30 seconds until the mixture is very smooth. Scrape the bowl as necessary. Separate 3 eggs and put in a separate bowl. Add the yolks and the remaining whole egg to the sweet potato mixture and pulse to combine. Transfer to a large bowl. Beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Add the remaining ½ cup of sugar, beat about 2 more minutes until the peaks are stiff and glossy. Fold 1/3 of the beaten egg whites into the sweet potato mixture gently using a spatula. Then carefully fold in the rest of the egg whites and pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake 45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack. Then remove the sides of the springform pan and let cool completely. Finally, melt the chocolate in a small saucepan over low heat. Stir in the soymilk. Spread the chocolate mixture over the cake and let stand until the chocolate sets.

Linzertorte for Pesach

This also comes from Debbie and looks relatively easy to make. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and use a 9-inch ungreased springform pan with a removable bottom or a pie plate.

- ¾ cup matzah cake meal
- ¼ cup potato starch
- 1½ cups almonds, ground fine
- 2 egg yolks
- ½ cup sugar
- 1/8 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup parve margarine or butter
- ½ cup raspberry jam (or more to taste)
- ½ egg white, slightly beaten

Combine the dry ingredients and then cut the butter into small chunks and combine until the mixture looks like coarse cornmeal. Add the yolks and knead until well blended. Turn 2/3 of the dough into the springform pan or pie plate. Press the dough over the bottom and up the sides for about ½ inch. Bake for 10 minutes and remove from the oven. Reset the oven to 325 degrees. When the crust is cool spread the jam over the bottom. Use the remaining dough to roll egg-sized balls between your palms and make long rolls about 1/3 to ½ inch in diameter. Arrange the rolls lattice style over the jam. Fasten the dough to the rim by pressing lightly. Brush the dough with the egg white and bake on the lower shelf of the oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour. When done, set on a rack to cool completely before removing the rim of the pan.

Sephardic Charoset

This recipe came from Debbie, but she attributes it to a woman named Lenore who lives in San Mateo, California. It's very simple but you will need patience to allow the raisins to caramelize by allowing them to be cooked for a long time. The recipe says, "quantities are not critical." Now, that's a recipe I can follow.

- 1 pound of golden raisins.
- Water
- Cinnamon to taste
- ½ to 1 cup chopped walnuts

Place the raisins in a large pot and cover with water plus 2 more inches. Bring to a boil briefly and cook uncovered on a very low simmer (you don't want to burn them, and you may need a little more water but don't drown the raisins) for 2–3 hours. When the color changes to a medium brown and it is thick, like a jam, remove from the stove and season to taste with the cinnamon. When it is cool, add the walnuts to your taste. ■

Calendar

March 2021

The Calendar has been updated to reflect events that are happening only online. Always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here. For prayer services, check congregation websites.

Monday 1

Magic in Mame-Loshn: Translating Harry Potter into Yiddish: Frankel Center. Translator Arun Viswanath, in conversation with Benjamin Paloff. Noon

WTBE Cooks. 3:30 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 2

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

The Feeling of History: Islam, Romanticism, and Andalusia: Frankel Center. Charles Hirschkind in conversation with Flora Hastings. 12:30 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 3

Feuilleton Workshop - 1930s Feuilletons: Salonica and Berlin: Frankel Center. Tamir Karkason, Ben Gurion University & Kerry Wallach, Gettysburg College. Noon.

Yidish tish (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please e-mail Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 4

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Tea and Torah Study with Rabbi Caine. BIC. 6:30 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 5

Candle Lighting 6:12 p.m. Ki Tisa

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

HIAS Refugee Shabbat: BIC. 6 p.m.

First Friday Shabbat: JCS. Secular Jewish readings, singing, candle lighting, challah and wine rituals, and a Yahrtzeit observance. Children are welcome. $10 (family $25). Registration required: jewishculturalsociety.org. For more information: 734-975-9872 or info@jewishculturalsociety.org. 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Saturday 6

Havdallah 7:13 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

HIAS Refugee Shabbat: BIC. 9:30 a.m.

Sunday 7

Chant Circle: Pardes Hannah. 11 a.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Jewish Ethics and Policing in the United States and Israel presented by Rabbi Fred Schwalb and Prof. Benjamin Ish-Shalom: BIC. 1 p.m.

Mira Awad in Concert and Conversation: EMU. 3 p.m.

Purim-Inspired Community Service Opportunity for Kids: Bend the Arc. Contact for more info: bendthearc.a2@gmail.com. 4:00 to 4:30 p.m.

"The Historical Jesus in His Jewish Context" with Amy-Jill Levine and Gabriele Boccaccini: Frankel Center. 7 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

Monday 8

Historical Novel Reading Group: WTBE. Contact Molly Lindner, burnham@umich.edu. 12:30 p.m.

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7

Tuesday 9

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Spirituality Book Club with TBE Cantor Emeritus Annie Rose. 7:30 p.m.

Life and Legacy 101: Jewish Community Foundation. 7:30

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 10

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

"The Historical Jesus in His Jewish Context," Frankel Center. 7 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 11

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Spirituality Book Club with TBE Cantor Emeritus Annie Rose. 12 p.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5 p.m.

End of Life Doulas: WTBE Community Wellness event. 7:30 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 12

Candle Lighting 6:20 p.m. Hachodesh

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 13

Havdallah 7:21 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

TaShma Come and Learn: AARC. Half hour before second Saturday Shabbat service. 10 a.m.

Havdalah and Healing: Marking One Year of the Pandemic in Our Lives: AARC. 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Menachem Kaiser: AAOM, TBE, BIC and AARC: Talk on his book, *Plunder: A Memoir of Family Property and Nazi Treasure*, register at https://www.annarborminyan.org/. Melave Malka Series Part III. 7:30 p.m.

Sunday 14

(Daylight savings begins, spring forward 1 hour)

Rosh Chodesh Nissan

Rosh Hodesh Nissan Minyan: Pardes Hannah. 9 a.m.

Zohar Study & Practice: Pardes Hannah. 11 a.m.

Social Justice Book Club reads Caste by Isabelle Wilkerson. BIC. Two sessions, March 14 and 21. Registration BIC website. 11:00 a.m.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

Family Game Night: BIC. 5 p.m.

Rosh Hodesh Nissan Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Monday 15

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

WTBE Cooks. 3:30 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 16

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

David W. Belin Lecture: Frankel Center. Rebecca Erbelding, on Raoul Wallenberg's work on behalf of the War Refugee Board in Budapest, Hungary. 7:30 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 17

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 18

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Pirke Avot with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5 p.m.

Schmooze and Booze: A Virtual Mixer With In-Person Drinks: Women's Division of the Jewish Federation. 7:30 p.m.

Building Bridges in a Divided World: The Role of Interfaith Collaboration in Justice Work: Community Conversation with JCLP. 6:30 to 9 p.m.

Friday 19

Candle Lighting 7:28 p.m. Vayikra

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Saturday 20

Havdallah 8:29 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Teen Led Shabbat: BIC. 9:30 a.m.

Shabbat Morning Service: Pardes Hannah. 10 a.m.

Shabbat Biweekly Lunch N' Learn: Contemporary Issues in Jewish Law with Rabbi Caine BIC. 11:45 a.m.

Sunday 21

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Social Justice Book Club reads Caste by Isabelle Wilkerson. BIC. Two sessions, March 14 and 21. Registration on the BIC website. 11:00 a.m.

Mystery Reader: BIC. 11 a.m.

Jewish Community Foundation Educational Workshop. Estate planning topics. 11 a.m.

Shmita Workshop: AARC. Creating Economic Justice. Register at ekarfarm.org, $18 fee. 12 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

Passover Lego Contest: BIC. 3 p.m.

Make Your Own Matzoh: BIC. 4 p.m.

Chef Michael Solomonov: Federation. Passover foods. Donor appreciation event. 4 p.m.

Monday 22

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. Zoom.. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7

Tuesday 23

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Pollster Jim Gerstein: EMU. "Making Sense Of The Jewish Vote In 2020" 7 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 24

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m.

Thursday 25

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Trauma and Memory: Thinking from Somali Diasporic Contexts: Frankel Center. Amal Alhaag, moderated by Alessandra Benedicty-Kokken. 11 a.m.

Syiuum with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 5p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m..

Friday 26

Candle Lighting 7:36 p.m. Shabbat HaGadol Tzav

Lunch and Learn: TBE. Zoom. Rabbi Whinston meets on Fridays for an informal discussion about religion. Noon–1 p.m.

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. AARC 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 27

First Seder

Havdallah 8:37 p.m.

Afikomen Scavenger Hunt/ Geocache Activity: BIC. With other congregations, through April 4.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50-9:50 a.m.

Sunday 28

Omer Day 1

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 3 p.m.

Musical Folk Seder: BIC. Beth Israel Congregation of Ann Arbor Youtube Channel join Rav Nadav and family and Dr. Neil Alexander, and a live band for the Rav Nadav Musical Folk Second Seder 6 p.m.

Second Night Seder: JCS. Community-wide event open to all to join a progressive secular Haggadah. There is no fee for JCS members but special donations are always welcome. Non-members $50 family fee or a $15 individual fee. We also invite you to consider sponsoring the seder for $50.Registration required: jewishculturalsociety.org. For more information: 734-975-9872 or info@jewishculturalsociety.org. 6 p.m.

Sefirat ha-Omer: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Monday 29

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin. BIC. 3:30p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m. *

Tuesday 30

Twenty-five minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m. *See first Tuesday of month*.

Wednesday31

Chopped Passover Edition: BIC. Mulitple times.

Yidish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p. m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC. Online 8 p.m. ■

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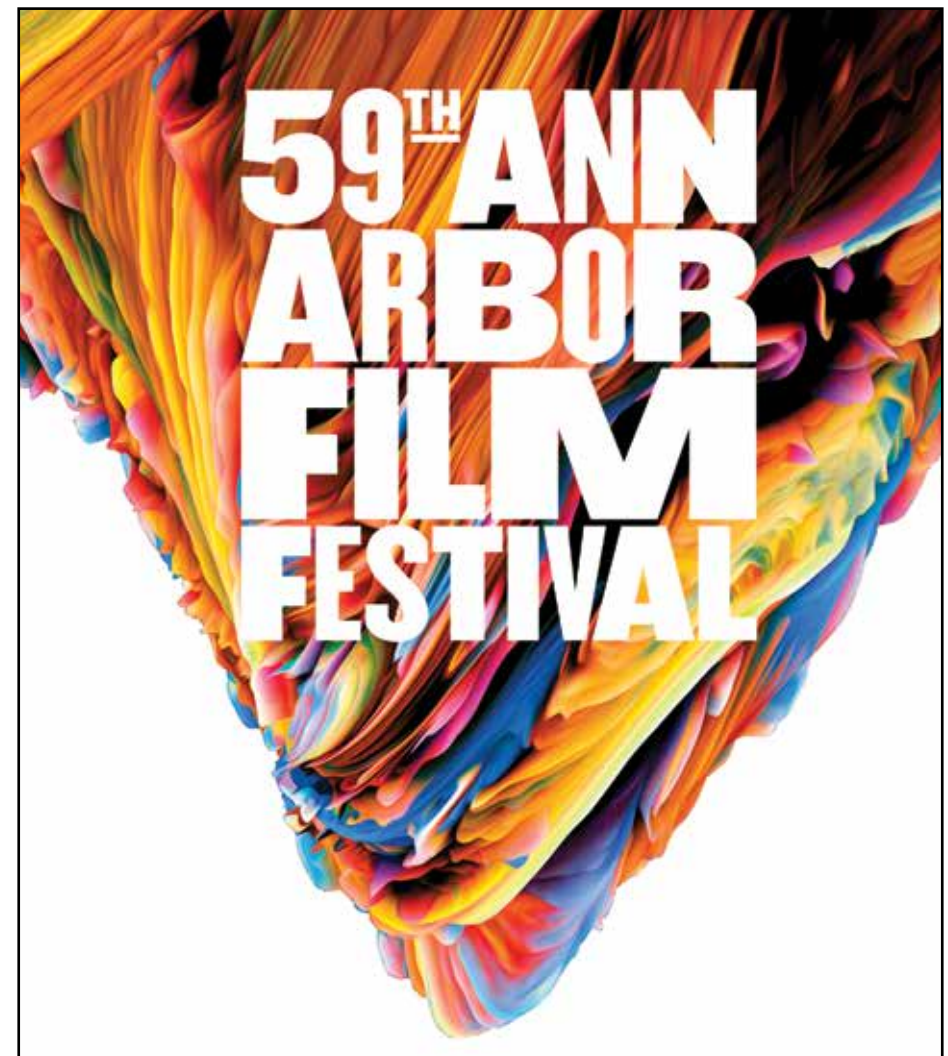


Online March 23-28, 2021
Passes on sale now: aafilmfest.org

Karen Lewis, Jewish union chief who made Chicago's teachers into a national force, is dead at 67

Philissa Cramer, originally for JTA

Karen Lewis, the firebrand former president of Chicago's teachers union, has died at 67 after a long battle with brain cancer.

Lewis, a convert to Judaism who said she was attracted to the religion's embrace of questions, ran the Chicago Teachers Union from 2010 to 2018. Under her leadership, the union became a model for a new breed of public education organizing in which teachers fought — and fought hard — not just for better pay and working conditions for themselves but for policy changes that they believed would benefit their students.

Karen Lewis holds a press conference after Chicago Teachers Union delegates voted to end their 2012 strike. PHOTO CAPTION: SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

Lewis burst into public awareness in 2012 when she led her union in a seven-day strike, its first in a quarter century, that resulted in major concessions from then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel. The outcome showed teachers in Chicago and beyond that they could win by fighting aggressively, and the more recent "Red for Ed" national wave of teacher activism is seen as a successor to the battles that Lewis waged, clad in her union's trademark color.

"Karen taught us how to fight, and she taught us how to love," the union said in a statement Tuesday. "Before her, there was no sea of red — a sea that now stretches across our nation."

Born and raised in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, Lewis was the only Black woman in her graduating class at Dartmouth College in 1974. Returning to her hometown several years later, she became a chemistry teacher. She also continued asking questions about God of the sort that had gotten her thrown out of Sunday school at the Lutheran church her parents attended.

Especially after seeing the portrayal of Talmud study in the 1983 movie *Yentl* (which starred her high school classmate Mandy Patinkin), Lewis found herself drawn to Judaism. In 1993, at age 40, she converted after studying with Rabbi Elliot Gertel at Hyde Park's Conservative Congregation Rodfei Zedek.

Lewis told the synagogue's newsletter two decades later that Jewish values were baked into her vision for education organizing.

"Judaism is clear. When you reap your fields, you leave something for people who don't have anything," she said. "It's all through Torah. You are commanded to treat those who have less than you as family."

Gertel said Lewis had been a diligent student and a voracious learner.

"She never stopped studying Judaism and reading Jewish history, theology and inspirational writings, ancient and modern," he wrote in a recollection to be distributed to the community from which he retired. "I was always impressed and inspired by the insights that she brought to her reading and to her own spiritual quest even as she faced pain and illness."

Lewis was a regular at services for decades, especially after taking on the steep responsibilities associated with union leadership.

"Shul has always been a place where I could have some refuge," she told the Chicago Jewish News in 2013. "I am very very adamant about having that time. I tell people, look, you can schedule me whenever you need to schedule me, but Saturday mornings I am absolutely unavailable, because I need that time in shul."

That year, just months after steering her union's 26,000 members to a new contract, Lewis celebrated her bat mitzvah at Rodfei Zedek, which she called "one of the most welcoming places of worship I've ever experienced" in part because of its diverse membership.

"I've been to lots of other Bar and Bat Mitzvahs and this one was the best ever," her successor at the union, Jesse Sharkey, told Chicago Magazine in 2014. (Sharkey grew up Jewish in small-town Maine.)

"We were just coming out of the strike, school closings, and it was a crazy period of time," Sharkey recalled. "On the side she was learning Hebrew. Sang, just belted it out, nothing like a pimply 13-year-old mumbling his Torah portion. It was gorgeous."

Lewis clashed mightily with Emanuel, Chicago's most prominent Jewish leader. Many in the city attribute the union's invigoration to the closed-door meeting in 2011 when Emanuel famously cursed at the union leader. She was poised to mount a formidable challenge in the 2015 mayoral election when she first fell ill. But the pair later became friends, bonding over their shared religion.

Emanuel sent Lewis matzah ball soup upon her retirement, according to Chicago's WBEZ, and they frequently discussed Jewish prayers and history. Could Lewis have unseated Emanuel as mayor had she not gotten brain cancer? He told the Chicago Sun-Times after her death, "As she would say, 'That's nothing but Midrash. It's hypothetical. It's a story made up of the Talmud.'" To the Chicago Tribune, Emanuel was more concise: "Who knows?"

At her bat mitzvah, Lewis read from the Torah portion Shelach, in which spies are sent to explore Israel and determine whether it would be a suitable home. When the spies return to the Hebrews, who have been wandering for 40 years since fleeing slavery in Egypt, all but two warn against entering the land. Lewis saw parallels between the messages the spies delivered and the naysaying she experienced before propelling her union to previously unimaginable prominence.

"It's a perfect portion for me," she told Chicago Magazine in 2012. "It's about people being told they can't do something, and they were able to."

Lewis is survived by a sister, Keli; her husband, John Lewis, whom she met when both were teachers at Lane Technical High School; and the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren she gained through her marriage. ■

Flory Jagoda, champion of Sephardic music, dies at 97

Ben Harris, originally for the JTA

Flory Jagoda, the Bosnian-born Holocaust survivor who became a champion of Ladino and Sephardic music after immigrating to the United States, has died.

Jagoda died January 29 at an assisted living facility in Alexandria, Virginia, according to an obituary in *The Washington Post*. She was 97.

As a singer, songwriter and performer, Jagoda was widely celebrated for her efforts to preserve Ladino music and Sephardic culture, winning a prestigious National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2002. Her Hanukkah composition "Ocho Kandelikas" ("Eight Little Candles"), written in 1983 when Jagoda was 60 years old, has become a beloved holiday tune widely covered by other artists.

Flory Jagoda

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fHPK6CEN1k

Born in Sarajevo in 1923, Jagoda grew up speaking Ladino, or Judeo-Spanish, the lingua franca of medieval Spanish Jewry. From her grandmother, she learned songs that were passed down in her family for generations.

In an interview with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Jagoda recalled how her childhood music teacher declined to teach her anymore after the Germans arrived and forced the Jews to wear identifying yellow badges adorned with a "z." When she arrived at her teacher's home wearing the badge, the teacher told her she had to go away.

"And that was tough, you know, uh, that was tough," Jagoda said in a video on the museum website. "And I just turned around, and me and my harmonica, my friend, just walked home brokenhearted, just brokenhearted."

Jagoda and her family fled after the German invasion, landing in Italy, where she met and married an American soldier, Harry Jagoda. She moved to the United States in 1946 and eventually became a concert performer and lecturer. She also hosted a monthly gathering of Ladino-speaking Jews who shared traditional food and music.

Jagoda was predeceased by her husband and a son. She is survived by two daughters and a son. ■

Obituaries

Helene Tamarin, of Plainfield, Massachusetts, died on January 19 of cancer, a day after she turned 70, her sons Sam and Jacob Ruben and nephew Pablo Tamarin at her side. Helene was born and raised in New York City, attended Antioch College, and settled in Ann Arbor in the mid-80s, before moving to western Massachusetts in 2010. Her son Sam described Helene as, "an incredible soul

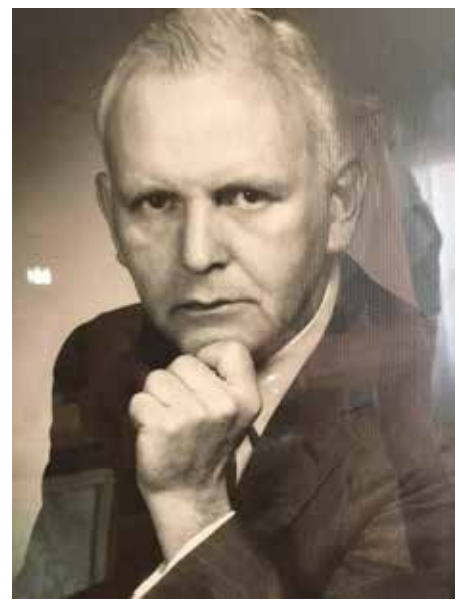
whose accomplishments are not measured in accolades received, or jobs held, but rather through the countless lives that she touched through the selfless love and support that she gave to so many … She had a profound impact on so many lives, from those that she'd known since childhood to those that she had only met in the last year, simply by being who she was — a person who created community and showed up time and time and time again for others with no thought of thanks or recognition but simply because it was the right thing to do."

Helene had deep roots in the Ann Arbor Jewish community and her family were longtime members of the Jewish Cultural Society. At one time or another, Helene was the Jewish Cultural Society (JCS) Sunday school teacher, office manager, newsletter editor, and school director. She helped with adult programming, field trips, youth group events, and sang in the JCS choir. A common refrain from JCS members has long been, "Helene was warm, engaging, and made us feel a part of the community from day one." She was a loving caretaker of the organization and its families. When it came to giving back to the community, Helene led by example. A friend of Helene's recently commented, "She was the epitome of the verb community!" Helene was also the JCS representative to the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (now known as the Cultural and Secular Jewish Organization) and the Michigan Coalition for Secular and Humanistic Jews.

Along with her deep commitment to her many communities, Helene was an avid gardener who was a member of the Community Farm of Ann Arbor (CSA) for many years, and maintained a garden plot at the Zion Community Garden, plus always having one at home. She was also a lover of music, both performing and as an audience member — she seemed to find a choir to join wherever she was living and for many, many years was a part of a recorder quartet that would gather regularly to play for the sheer love of the music and the company.

She will be missed by so many, but her legacy lives on through the many lives she touched and the example she set. Contributions in Helene's memory can be made to Planned Parenthood (Plannedparenthood.org), the ACLU (https://www.aclu.org/action/) or the Jewish Cultural Society (https://jewishculturalsociety.org/donate-to-jcs/).

Dr. Seymour Epstein died peacefully on Wednesday, February 3, a few weeks shy of his 100th birthday, at the home he designed and built for his family in Deal, New Jersey. Epstein was a civilian research physicist for the Electronics Research and Development Command of the U.S. Department of Defense. A native of Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, he spoke only Yiddish until kindergarten. An excellent student with a prodigious memory, he went on to study French literature at Brooklyn College before transferring to the City College of New York where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical engineering. He later received his MS in engineering and Ph.D. in physics from the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, now



part of New York University. After a stint at Goodyear in Akron, Ohio, Epstein served in the U.S. Navy during and immediately following World War II, with duties that took him to the Philippines and China. His career, at Camp Evans and Fort Monmouth, earned him many official commendations for theoretical innovations relating to laser emissions and the measurement of elasticity in quartz crystals. In the 1980s he was part of the Hexagon group that conceived of the artificial intelligence that led to the development of the smart bomb. His wide-ranging interests included computers, radar, and theoretical mathematics. He also taught mathematics as an adjunct professor at Rutgers University and Monmouth College.

Epstein's professional fascination with piezoelectric waves in quartz led him to the love of his life, the former Ruth Goldberg, who was charmed by a sparkling crystal he carried with him to a dance in New York City. After a courtship in Manhattan, the couple married in 1955 and lived in Red Bank and Asbury Park, before settling into their house in Deal Harbor Estates. Over 57 years of marriage, Epstein helped raise four children, explored six continents by car, ship, train, and plane, and was active in the Jersey Shore community as a volunteer science educator for kids (including demonstrating holograms), and as an elected member of the Deal School Board of Education, where he successfully championed adding algebra to the curriculum. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of music and loved to sing romantic standards in a beautiful tenor voice with his family gathered around the piano, also performing in the Deal Summer Theater production of *The King and I*. He also loved to dance, especially with his beautiful wife. A language perfectionist, he was never at a loss for a pun. He was a true force of nature who was always eager to share his passion for science and his love of learning, inspiring all around him.

Epstein never forgot his Jewish roots and was active in the Jewish community as a long-time member of Temple Beth El, the Monmouth/Jersey Shore JCC and Jewish War Veterans Post 125, as well as an advisor to and supporter of *Moment*, a national Jewish magazine.

His beloved wife, Ruth Epstein, a former executive director of the Monmouth JCC, died in 2012. He is survived by two daughters, Nadine Epstein (John) of Washington, D.C., and Marcy Epstein of Ann Arbor, MI; two sons, Donald Epstein (Jeanne) of Ocean Township, NJ, and Michael Epstein (Molly) of Santa Monica, CA; seven grandchildren, Charles (Hali), Raquel (Amir), Ralph (Danielle), Jeffrey, Noah, Joseph (Claudia), and Max; his brother, Herbert Epstein, of Delray Beach, FL; eight great-grandchildren, Nicole, Jean, Jeanne, Lily, Michael, Donald, Gabriella, and Joseph; and his devoted caregiver, Norma Germain.

A graveside service was held at Brothers of Israel Cemetery, West Long Branch, NJ., on Feb 4. A public celebration of the life of Seymour Epstein will be scheduled for later this year.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Jersey Shore JCC at jccjerseyshore.org/forms/donation or 100 Grant Ave, Deal, NJ 07723 or by calling 732-531-9100, and to a special fund in his memory at Moment Magazine at momentmag.com/donate or Moment Magazine, 4115 Wisconsin Ave NW, LL10, Washington D.C., 20015 or by calling 202-363-6422.

Irwin Pollack, 95, born in Bridgeport, Connecticut on April 10, 1925 to Benjamin and Mary Beimel Pollack; died in Ann Arbor, Michigan, January 23, 2021. Irwin moved with his family to Miami Beach in his early teens after he contracted rheumatic

fever. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Florida in 1945 and earned his PhD in 1949 from Harvard specializing in psychophysics. His career started as a civilian scientist at the Air Force Operations Lab in Washington, D.C. and the Cambridge Research Lab in Bedford, Massachusetts. In 1963 he came to the University of Michigan and retired in 1995 as Emeritus Professor of Psychology. Irwin was a Fellow of the Acoustical Society of America and of the American Psychological Association. His research took him to Japan, New Zealand, China, San Diego, and Cambridge, Massachusetts. Irwin and family spent an impactful 15 months in Holland and Cambridge University in the early 1960s. He was internationally known for his novel approaches to improve the understanding of the human auditory system.

Irwin is survived by his wife of almost 72 years, Marcille Kaufman Pollack, his three children Sharron (m. Joe Weixlmann), Phyllis, and Stanley. He was a wonderfully generous and active grandfather to his grandchildren Dave Metz (Juliette Wallack), Sarah Metz Krissoff (Austin), Seth Weixlmann, Adira Weixlmann (fiancé Tyler Browne), and Ben Weixlmann (Brittany) as well as great-grandson Paxton Metz. He was predeceased by his brother Norman Pollack.

Irwin spent much of his post-retirement time being the devoted caregiver to Marcille. They are (life) members of Beth Israel Congregation since 1963. Irwin leaves a wonderful legacy of generosity, wise guidance, kindness, and love with his family. Arrangements by The Ira Kaufman Chapel. 248-569-0020. Irakaufman.com. ■

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Simchas and Sorrows

Mazel Tov to:

Harriet Bakalar and Ed Tobes on the birth of their grandson, Oscar Wyatt Tobes, son of Daniel and Erin Tobes.

Condolences to:

The family of Wendy Jane, mother of Matthew Jane (Lauren Gold), grandmother of Sam, Aaron and Benjamin Jane. Died January 5, 2021.
The family of Charles C. Rosenbaum, father of Abby Rosenbaum (Tom Bick), grandfather of Mabel and Julian Bick. Died January 12, 2021.
Barbara Kramer on the death of her father, Mitchell A. Kramer, January 15.
Karlan Bender on the death of his brother, Darwin Bender, January 21.
Ellyne Monto on the death of her brother, Barry Polsky, January 22.
Marcille K. Pollack on the death of her husband, Irwin Pollack, January 24.
Lori Greenberg on the death of her husband, Arie Greenberg, January 24.
Ronit Ajlen on the death of her father, Arie Greenberg, January 24.
Marilyn Kirsch on the death of her mother, Millie Dittrich, January 29.
The family of George Bornstein, husband of Jane York Bornstein, father of Ben Bornstein, Rebecca Bornstein (Alex Roy) and Joshua Bornstein (Mei Bornstein), grandfather of Lilya Roy and Serena Bornstein, died Tuesday, February 2.
The family of Hy Fox, uncle of Shoshanah Mandel-Warner (Jan Warner), great uncle of Kayla Mandel, and brother of Lillian Fox. Hy died Saturday, February 6.
Michael Morris on the death of his brother, Robert Morris, February 8.
John Rothchild on the death of his mother, Lorraine Rothchild, February 8.
Julia and Daniel Rothchild on the death of their grandmother, Lorraine Rothchild, February 8.
The family of Peter Freedman-Doan, died February 14.
The family of Jay Meltzer, father of Amy Meltzer, father-in-law of Scott Gitlin, grandfather of Emily and Andrew, died February 15.

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